BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Mitsugi (Mitaru) Muraoka

"You know, today people, they tell they work hard. (Chuckles) They make you laugh. They don't know what is hard. They don't know what is hard work. Well, but they think we was crazy, too, you know, (chuckles) going through all that, eh?"

Mitsugi Muraoka, known to Kōloa people as Mitaru, was born February 15, 1905 at Lāwai Stable Camp, Kaua'i. His father, Hiroki Muraoka, was a luna for McBryde Sugar Company. Mitaru was the third of ten children.

At age nine, Mitaru and his family moved to Kōloa, where his father worked for Kōloa Sugar Company. Mitaru attended Kōloa School and completed the eighth grade in 1919. He then began a fifty-year career with Kōloa Sugar Company. Mitaru began in the sugar fields as a laborer doing a variety of jobs: kālai, hāpai ko, seed cutter, fertilizer spreader, and truck helper. He later worked in the construction department and then as a portable track layer.

In 1929, Mitaru was chosen to be a harvesting overseer, where he helped supervise harvesting operations, including cane burning and portable track layout.

After Kōloa Sugar Company's merger with Grove Farm in 1948, Mitaru was named harvesting superintendent in charge of all harvesting operations for Grove Farm. Mitaru retired in 1970.

Still a resident of Kōloa, Mitaru and his wife raised six children and currently have five grandchildren.

Tape No. 15-5-1-87

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mitsugi (Mitaru) Muraoka (MM)

March 19, 1987

Kōloa, Kaua'i

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Burt Ebata (BE)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Mitaru Muraoka on March 19, 1987 at his home in Kōloa. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Burt Ebata.

Okay. Mr. Muraoka, why don't you start by telling us when you were born and where you were born?

(Roosters crow throughout interview.)

MM: Yeah, I was born in Lāwa'i Stable [Camp]. Well, actually, I call it Kōloa because it is part of Kōloa District, see. But Lawa'i Stable is far on the other end. I was born February 15, 1905.

WN: What was your father doing in Lāwa'i Stables?

MM: At the time when I was born, he was a luna. We call luna, but actually, he was a supervisor, no?

BE: That was McBryde [Plantation], yeah?

MM: McBryde, yeah.

WN: So this was sugar?

MM: Yeah, sugar plantation.

WN: You said Lāwa'i Stables? You know, what was that?

MM: Well, why they call "Lāwa'i Stable," because they had a big stable there. And then, they had all the mules, and horses--you know, working horses, working mules, over there. They had small camps here and there. But the Stable [Camp] where I was born, they had the big stable, see, where they keep all the horses and the mules at. Yeah, I guess that's why they call it Lāwa'i Stable.

BE: So, Stable Camp, yeah?

MM: Stable Camp.

WN: So what, your father took care of the horses?

MM: No, no. His job was outside, taking care the kālai and hanawai people. They have a stable where they get what they call stable men. They get about three, four guys, all depending how big the stable is, you know. The bigger the stable, well, they got to get more hands, see. But I don't know. I was small kid, so I don't know how many men was working at the stable. But actually, I know a person was a stable man there because one of his sons was my classmate and we played together. In fact, the father used to go fishing, and once in a while, his son and me, we used to go down the beach. The father used to throw net there, and we the bag boys, see? (Chuckles)

WN: What beach?

MM: Down the. . . . Oh, I don't know. You know where's [Philip] Palama's place?

BE: Palama?

MM: Yeah.

BE: Kukui'ula side?

MM: No. Further down that side.

BE: That's where the [Nōmilu] Pond is?

MM: Yeah. That's the place. That's Palama's place. But before Palama, they used to get people. Actually, maybe it's owned by McBryde, I think. But before Palama, I remember--I don't know, I forget his name, though, but a Japanese family was leasing that place. And that pond used to get lot of mullets, see. And then, he used to make business with mullet, eh? Once in a while, he go surround it, catch the mullet, and go come sell in the camp. Then, long after, Palama took over.

BE: Had to be a pretty big pond, yeah, was?

MM: Yeah, big pond. And that pond, I hear, some places are really deep, you know.

BE: Oh, deep?

MM: Yeah, deep. But you know, like the mullet like that, they don't stay where too deep, eh? They come near where the shallow place. And where the shallow place, that's where the Japanese fella have his home, see. And he used to get one big tide gate. When high tide like that, the wave come and then go inside the pond. That's how I hear he used to get his small baby mullet come inside.

WN: So was, what? Brackish water?

MM: Yeah, brackish water.

WN: Where's your father from?

MM: From Kumamoto.

BE: From Japan he came directly to McBryde Sugar then?

MM: No. I heard, he say he first came to Mānā. He stayed there, you know, few months there, then he. . . .

BE: Oh, yeah? Oh, he came to Mānā first?

WN: You know when he came?

MM: I don't know when he (chuckles) came.

WN: What about your mother's side?

MM: Well, they came together, eh? It's not like the olden days, they used to get picture bride and da kine stuff, no? But, no, she wasn't picture bride. They came together.

BE: So Koremitsu [Muraoka, MM's older brother], he was born in Japan and . . .

MM: Yeah. So, you can figure out that they were married in Japan, and they had my oldest brother there. Then when they came this side, they left my brother with his [grand]parents.

WN: And they called [for] him later?

MM: Yeah, called him later, yeah.

BE: Oh, he was left behind, then?

MM: Yeah. Those days I think a lot of people was like that.

BE: Yeah, yeah. I've heard of that.

WN: So, you're number three. What about the second boy?

MM: Second boy, he died. He died, oh, maybe about five, six years ago.

BE: But he was born here?

MM: He was born here, yeah.

WN: So you're the second to be born in Hawai'i then?

MM: Yeah. We were ten in the family, eh? Eight living. Two died

already. Two boys died. My older brother and my younger brother, Richard.

WN: What else do you remember about growing up in Lāwa'i? Like, what school did you go to?

MM: Well, we used to go. . . . You know where [Shigeo] Akaji living?

BE: Yeah, yeah. Lāwa'i, yeah?

MM: Yeah, Lāwa'i. If you go, let's say, from Kōloa way, you will come to that [defunct] pineapple cannery [once owned by Kaua'i Pine], then you zig-zag to where Akaji place, and you going down, keep on going down. Where the houses start in the valley--you know, lot of Portuguese houses, I think.

BE: Oh, down there?

MM: Yeah, in the valley. Right inside there. You know, from the main road, maybe about hundred yards inside. Where the main road is, is a kind of valley like. And where I'm talking, where the school was, it goes up, and then it's kind of on a hill like, you know.

BE: Toward Kalāheo, then? The school?

MM: Yeah, toward Kalāheo way. And every morning we used to come school over there, English[-language] school. And then, after English school, we used to go Japanese[-language] school by the cannery, you know, where my brother was teaching.

BE: Yeah, yeah. Up on the hill.

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Up on the hill. On the left-hand side, on the hill. So, when the Japanese[-language] school finish, it's almost dark already. On the way going, we count, "Hey, look the star there. Look, 'nother star there. Look, 'nother star there."

(Laughter)

BE: Oh, had to walk all the way, eh?

MM: And then, we got to walk all the way down. Way down. You know where Dr. [A. R.] Glaisyer was? Dr. Glaisyer is about halfway. But from there on down, we got to go about couple more miles yet.

(Laughter)

WN: So, between your English school and your Japanese[-language] school, how far?

MM: Oh, I would say, a good mile, no? Mile or mile and a half, eh?

BE: It's over a mile. I think it's over a mile.

MM: Yeah, over a mile.

BE: Make the curve, eh?

MM: Yeah, you got to circle. Where I talking about, the Akaji place, you got to go like that, eh? Yeah.

BE: That's right. It's over a mile.

WN: And from Japanese[-language] school to home, how far?

BE: Oh, from Japanese[-language] school to home, maybe about (laughs) maybe ten miles, I think.

(Laughter)

WN: So what time you used to get home?

MM: That's why I say, on the way already, we counting the stars already.

(Laughter)

MM: Yeah, you tell that to the kids now days, they think we was really foolish, dumb guys, no? (Laughs)

WN: And your brother was the teacher at the Japanese[-language] school?

MM: Oh, that was way later on. That was real later on. Not when I was going school. After I quit school, like that.

BE: Yeah, after you moved to Kōloa, then?

MM: Yeah, yeah.

BE: Oh, he taught at Lāwa'i before he taught at Kōloa, then? He taught at Lāwa'i first? Lāwa'i Japanese School?

MM: No, he teach Kōloa first. Then he moved down there.

WN: Were there stores around there? Were there stores in your folks' area?

MM: Stores? Yeah, they had one plantation store and one Chinese store.

BE: Oh, yeah? Two stores in there?

MM: Well, it's not in that camp. It's another camp. In our [Stable] Camp, they used to get one small Japanese store.

BE: In addition to the plantation store?

MM: No. Where I'm talking, the plantation store and the Chinese store was in a different camp. And where I was born and where we was

living, they had one small Japanese store. Really small, you know. Maybe what they sell is only, what, candy or something like that only.

WN: So where did you folks go for your big things?

MM: Big things, that's where. . . . They used to come from here, from Kōloa. They used to get fellas that come down there.

BE: Oh, yeah. Salesmen, yeah?

MM: Salesmen, yeah. They used to come with buggy and the wagon. They come one day and they come take orders. Of course, they take the orders same day. They come every other day, I think, not every day. When they come one day, they deliver what's been ordered before. And they deliver, and the same time, they take order for the next trip. So every time they come, they bringing something, and same time they take orders.

WN: Do you remember what stores from Kōloa came?

MM: Kōloa Plantation Store. They used to get two stores. Rego Store and the plantation, Kōloa Plantation Store.

WN: So, Kōloa Plantation Store came to you folks even though you folks were McBryde?

MM: Yeah.

WN: What about McBryde Plantation Store?

MM: Well, McBryde Plantation, they didn't come, no? Although, down in McBryde, I hear they had big store, eh? But they didn't come over there take orders, no. And Kukui'ula they had store, but they didn't come our place. And then . . .

BE: How big was that Stable Camp? How big?

MM: How big the camp was?

BE: Actually, how many homes around there?

MM: Homes, I figure maybe they had about. . . .

BE: Plantation homes.

MM: Yeah. Ah, maybe they had about twenty, twenty-five homes, no?

WN: Mostly Japanese?

MM: Yeah, mostly Japanese. No, Japanese and Chinese. They had Chinese. They had Chinese Camp, where they had about a dozen Chinese, no?

And then, those time, Tao business [i.e., I. Tao Store], they opened up a store, too, you know. You fella had, too, yeah [i.e., Ebata Store]?

BE: Yeah.

MM: All right, Tao. Maybe once a year or so, they used to come down there, what they call yomise. You know what is yomise mean? Yomise means a "night store."

BE: "Night store"?

MM: Yeah, "night," yo, eh? Mise is "store," see. They used to come down there. Why they come in the evening like that, because during the working time, most of the fellas go out work, eh? Of course, the wives stay home, but they like show the men, too. So Tao men, they used to bring all the goods down there and then display out.

BE: Oh, yeah? First time I hear that.

WN: And you can just buy?

BE: Yeah, you can just buy.

WN: Like what kind stuff? Foodstuff?

MM: I don't know exactly what kind stuff. I guess they had foodstuff and all kinds, but not big stuff because they got to go down with the buggy, eh? (Chuckles)

And I kinda remember that even those days, they used to come with--once in a while, you know. Maybe once a year or so. Fella with a big phonograph. You know that big phonograph with the speaker like this [i.e., gramophone]? And fellas go over there, listen, and pay maybe two bits [twenty-five cents] or something.

(Laughter)

WN: That store, same store?

MM: No, no, no, no. Not in a store. This is out in the open. (Laughs)

WN: And used to play records, you mean?

MM: Yeah, yeah. They play record, eh? You don't see that. Once in a while you see in the TV, though. The big--you know what kind I mean? With the big speaker like this?

BE: Yeah. Just like a big horn or something.

MM: Big horn like. (Laughs) And the box behind, you know.

BE: Yeah, I remember that.

MM: Well, those days, even those thing was precious, you know. Today, those kids, they don't even look at it, that thing.

BE: Well, not too many families could own that, anyway.

MM: No, no, no, no. Those times, I no remember any family owned that. But that's why I say, a fella on business come over there and put out that. And fellas go listen. They pay two bits or something.

WN: What about movies? They had somebody come around with movies?

MM: Movies? I no remember any movies, but I think they came one or two times with what they call that? That picture that doesn't move?

BE: Silent, oh, well. . . .

MM: No, not even silent.

WN: Like slides, you mean?

MM: Yeah, yeah, like slides. Yeah, something like slides. You know, they put the slide in, and then little while, they change it, put another one. (Chuckles)

WN: Like what kind pictures?

MM: Well, mostly scenery like that, no? (Chuckles)

WN: And they used to charge for that, too?

MM: Yeah, charge. Everything is charge because the fella who come with that, that's their business. They living on that.

(Laughter)

BE: That was entertainment, you know.

MM: Yeah, entertainment.

WN: What else you folks did to have good time out there?

MM: Well, the only other things that we play, you know, we play ball, and play master. Mostly it's master, because for play ball you need lot of people, lot of boys. We don't get that much boys, eh? So, what we do mostly is play master.

WN: Any other games you remember?

MM: No. That's about all. We play master, and then climb trees . . .

BE: What about kites? You fly kites?

MM: No, we didn't play kites.

BE: What about top? Did you spin top?

MM: Ah, top, yeah, we used to play. Kite, no, because we don't know how to make kites, and, you know, our folks didn't know how to make kite, too. And no more kite to buy. Top, yeah. We used to.

BE: We used to make our own kites, you know.

MM: Yeah, but when we was down there, we were so young yet, eh?

WN: I wonder, you know, you folks living in Lāwa'i, and then had Kōloa kids over here. Did they consider you folks like more country kids or something like that?

MM: Well, I guess so. I don't know because I wasn't over here yet at the time, eh? So, I don't know how they feel about us. At the time we were staying in Lāwa'i, I didn't know none of these boys over here. So, we don't play with these boys over here. We only play among ourselves over there.

BE: Hardly any transportation, yeah, so . . .

MM: Yeah, no transportation. Oh, yeah.

BE: You couldn't go down to the next town, you know.

MM: One thing my dad do, and I still remember that. Maybe I was about seven or eight years old, I think. When the first plane came over here, they used to tell, "Tom Gunn, Tom Gunn." And McBryde was good enough to take out the train, you know, and bring those from Wahiawa, Lāwa'i, Kukui'ula, all those people over there who was interested in coming to come see the plane. And the plane landed up here. [Tom Gunn landed the first airplane on Kaua'i near Kōloa in 1914.]

BE: Pānau.

MM: Pānau. Yeah. On the hill right here. At that time, the hill was all with--I don't know if you fellas know what kind is foxtail grass.

BE: Oh, they didn't have pineapple, those days? [Pānau is an area near Kōloa where pineapple was once grown.]

MM: No, no more nothing. Not even pasture. Only foxtail grass. Foxtail grass is a grass that comes up, sticks out like this, and on here get one kind of foxtail like, you know. That's why they call 'em "foxtail," eh? (Chuckles) The grass is short. And then, the tail sticking up. Sticking up like this.

WN: About what? Three, four inches high?

MM: Yeah, yeah. Three, four inches above the other grass, eh? So they

call it "foxtail." And the grass was little bit taller than that, maybe around here, eh? So, the pilot [Tom Gunn], he can see. At least no more no rocks. Oh, he can land easy. And the small plane. You don't have to get long runway, eh?

BE: You mean, the plane came directly from Honolulu?

MM: Yeah. And then, because plenty fellas wen go take a look, he go, and he go up, and then circle 'round, land. You know, he did several times for the people look, eh?

WN: So, where did the train take you folks to go see?

MM: Oh, the train took us right behind the Hawaiian church [i.e., The Church at Kōloa] over here.

BE: Oh, back there?

MM: Yeah. You remember, they had a . . .

BE: I remember, behind Tao Garage [Tao Kōloa Shell Service] came, eh?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And then, that railroad track used to go up by Tao Garage. You see--the bridge still there.

BE: Yeah, yeah. That's right.

MM: The bridge still there. And then, used to go where they call the old mill, eh? Over there, used to get the big warehouse. And then, Kōloa Plantation, they used to bring the sugar till there. And then McBryde, from Port Allen, they get that locomotive. They used to come get the sugar through there, see.

BE: Oh, I see. That was a sugar warehouse.

MM: Yeah, yeah. Sugar warehouse.

WN: You mean, where the old mill used to be?

MM: Yeah.

WN: Across Sueoka's then?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BE: Yeah, I remember that warehouse. Kind of a big warehouse.

MM: Yeah, kind of big warehouse. Right close to the railroad track, you know.

BE: Yeah, yeah. Right on the side.

MM: Yeah, on the side. Just enough for the train go back and forth.

BE: Big warehouse.

WN: How often did Tom Gunn come on the plane?

MM: Only once he came.

WN: Oh, only once he came?

MM: Yeah. Only one day he came. But he made several flights, you know. I don't know if he made any arrangement with the plantation, because the plantation knew that he was coming. So that's why they brought all these laborers who want to come take a look.

WN: How old were you when he came?

MM: That's why I said, I was maybe eight or nine years old. Maybe eight. Yeah. Seven or eight, maybe.

WN: He did acrobatic, too?

MM: No, no, no, no, no. Those pilots, those days yet, (chuckles) I guess they not so experienced like that. And the plane itself is not so modern, eh? Yeah, you got to watch out. (Laughs)

WN: I guess that was not too long before the war then, yeah?

MM: No. Long before the war. Long, long before the war. The war was in '41, eh?

WN: No, no. The World War I.

MM: Oh, oh, World War I. Yeah, I guess around there, no?

WN: So you went to Lāwa'i School until you moved to Kōloa?

MM: Yeah.

WN: And you moved to Kōloa when you were about what? Nine years old?

MM: Yeah, nine or ten, no? Something like that.

WN: How come you folks moved?

MM: Well, in a way, I'm glad that my father moved. I don't know what made him move because he never say [to] us why he moved or anything. But he moved here. Why I say I'm glad he moved because, you know, Kōloa is a bigger place than where we was. Where we was is one small, little camp. Of course, Kōloa is not so big town, too, but then compared with where we was, yeah.

WN: You folks' place had Filipinos, too? That time? Lāwa'i?

MM: Where I was born?

WN: Mm hmm [yes].

MM: I only remember one Filipino. Why I remember this Filipino is, this Filipino man was a young guy, although he was maybe about in his early '30s or so, or maybe late '20s, somewhere around there. He used to get gun, see. He go hunt in the afternoon, weekends, like that. He go hunt for the mynah bird. And then, those days, it's not strict. And not only that, it's really lonely place over there. No more police or anything. So he can go shoot anything any day, anytime he like because nobody know. So, (chuckles) he see me all time kinda checking on him, too, eh? Because I like see how they (chuckles) use their gun and all kind. So, I kinda made friends with him. And he tell me, "You like eat mynah bird?"

No, I never eat mynah bird before. I don't know how the damn thing taste like.

"Come, come, come. We go."

So, one weekend in the afternoon, we went. And he'd gone into the stable, where the horses and mules eating. He go grab one handful of barley. Then he came out in the yard, you know. The pen is pretty big place, eh? And he go spread all the barley. And here, the mynah birds they look that, eh? They come, all the mynah birds, all come eat. (Chuckles) So, the birds, too, they don't know what is gun, eh?

(Laughter)

MM: His gun, "Pom! Pom!" He had double-barrel, see. "Pom! Pom!" Oh, the mynah bird, poor thing. And then, I think he get, oh, maybe about ten, I think. He tell me, "Okay. You like eat, come. We go my house. I go clean, I go cook."

So I went. The damn thing was tough, you know. Tough, but no, the way he fixed up--he put wild tomato. You know <u>da kine</u> wild tomato, and cook 'em. Oh, been taste all right, though. (Laughs) I still kind of remember. It taste all right.

WN: Mynah bird?

MM: Mynah bird. (Laughs) That's the only Filipino I know. And then they had a <u>Pake</u> Camp, Chinese Camp. They had about, oh, maybe about ten or twelve Chinese over there. I no remember who those Chinese was.

WN: What about Portuguese?

MM: Portuguese, they had what they call Portuguese Camp. All kind of far away, no? They had some Portuguese, but I no remember that. And I guess maybe they had some Filipinos among them. That, I don't know.

BE: Yeah. Very few, though.

MM: Very few, yeah. As you go down from Glaisyer's place, you know, kind of downhill. When you hit the cane field, you go down little ways, they get road that goes to the left. One go straight down, one goes to the left. The one goes to the left, there's a reservoir over there. The road is above the reservoir or below the reservoir. That, I don't remember good. But anyway, that road that goes to the left is to go to the Portuguese Camp. Maybe the Portuguese Camp maybe had about ten houses or so. And then if you keep on going, they used to get Japanese Camp. And get another about ten houses or so. And then, that road, if you keep on going, it turns and then it come to where we was born, the Lawa'i Stable Camp.

Oh, yeah, another thing. When I was, oh, maybe about seven or eight years old, I think. Now, reservoir I'm talking about, when you turn left and get one reservoir there, me and one other boy about my age, we wen go take a walk around the side of the reservoir. In the reservoir, here and there, they get kinda ditch-like. It's kinda ditch-like because every reservoir, they have to get some inlet that water come in. And some places kinda deep. So this boy wen slide. You know, slippery, see. The reservoir all mud, eh? Slippery. He wen slide inside there. And he go like this, like this, like this, yeah (MM flails arms)? And then, I don't know, I scared, too, because I might slide in there, too. So I don't know what to do. Ah, then, quick, I wen think to myself, "Ey, that ditchman must be home now." Was around lunchtime, see. So I run to that house. And good thing, he was home. And I told him, and we ran, come back. Well, the ditch wasn't so deep. But the man pulled the boy out. And he kinda lift up the leg, and then shake 'em. The boy wen throw plenty water out. But good thing, was soon enough. And he was all right. Never need to bring hospital or anything. (Chuckles)

WN: About how long was he underwater? Or in the water?

MM: Well, I don't know. Ah, I imagine about ten minutes or so, eh? Because I have to run to the house. I don't know, but. . . . (Chuckles)

BE: Maybe he was just. . . .

MM: Yeah, maybe once in a while, his nose come up, too, I think. You know, if a fella, ten minutes too long, eh? But I figure it's maybe about ten minutes, because I got to run to the home and come back, eh? So I guess once in a while, his nose come up. (Chuckles)

WN: I was wondering, had plantation hospital, too?

MM: No, never get down there. No more.

WN: So where do you folks go?

MM: We used to come over here . . .

WN: Kōloa?

MM: [Dr. Alfred Herbert] Waterhouse. You know Waterhouse?

BE: Yeah.

MM: Yeah. We used to come here.

WN: So, actually, you folks used the Kōloa Plantation facilities quite a bit, then, eh?

MM: You mean, as far as hospital and things . . .

WN: Hospital and stores, like that.

MM: Yeah. But the hospital, I don't know how they used to work that out. Maybe McBryde partly own or what, I don't know. But looks like the [McBryde] Plantation people used to come over there [Kōloa Hospital]. Like Lāwa'i Stable [and] Kukui'ula [residents]. Because no more dispensary or anything down there. And that's the nearest place.

WN: I was wondering, was there pineapples out there [Lāwa'i] at that time?

MM: Pineapple at that time? No, no pineapple at that time. Way later on--I don't know if, Burt, you remember--they used to get pineapple up here.

BE: Yeah, I know up Pānau.

MM: Pānau, yeah. But that was way later on.

BE: Oh, later on?

MM: I think after we move here, after we move Kōloa.

WN: But the cannery was there?

MM: Yeah, the cannery was there. Yeah, the cannery was there because I know when I used to go Japanese[-language school] over there, the cannery was there.

WN: Hmm. So where did the pineapples come from?

MM: From all Kalāheo side and all up there. Of course, they had lot of homesteaders, eh?

WN: So when you moved to Kōloa [in 1914], you went to Kōloa School?

MM: Yeah. Kōloa School. The school was over here [i.e., its present location]. The building no more already. Yeah, the building no more. (Chuckles)

BE: Yeah, you remember the building burned down [in 1973]?

MM: Yeah. When we came over here, I think Mrs. [Minnie] Aka was teaching already.

WN: She was your teacher?

MM: No. Ah . . .

BE: How about Mrs. [Margaret] Blake, too?

MM: Yeah, I guess I went her room, I think, when we first came. Yeah, Mrs. Blake. That's about the oldest teachers. And then, later on, Miss [Tsui] Tashima.

WN: So when you first moved to Kōloa, try describe what you remember about Kōloa when you first moved or what you were thinking.

MM: Yeah, when we first moved (chuckles). . . . Yeah.

BE: You moved into a big plantation home, huh?

MM: No, not when we first came. When we first came, we moved to a house right above Sueoka Store, where Old Man [Manuel R.] Jardin, [Sr.] used to own.

BE: Oh, a small house?

MM: Yeah, small house. And then, after several months, we moved right across. There was one road that go up, eh? We move right across about, oh, maybe hundred feet onto the right side. Now, those days, they used to get small houses, you know. Plantation people used to get small houses. When we moved to that place where I'm talking now, they used to get one old Japanese man. He didn't get one eye, only one side. And he had one side arm, the right side I think, no more. From here down, no more. And he used to be watchman. We were talking about watchman up there. You know the small little hill? He used to be watchman.

BE: Near Waitā, yeah?

MM: Yeah. And his job was to go up there every night. Watchman, only for nighttime, see. And what he's watching for is for fire. He stay on top the hill and then watch for fire at the plantation. If any place get fire, well, he goes down and then ring the bell. All right, his job was to watch for any fire. About three o'clock, he start to walk down from the hill, you know.

And he used to go to the warehouse. His job was to ring the bell, four o'clock. Four o'clock sharp, you know. Ring the bell to wake up the camp people. Yeah, wake up the camp people for the week. Camp people, you know, maybe some of them, they no more alarm, eh? They figure on that alarm for the (chuckles) bell to ring.

WN: This was the warehouse where the old mill was?

MM: No, no. That's different. That warehouse we were talking a while ago was the sugar warehouse. But this warehouse is [where] a fella stays in the warehouse every day. He take out tools for people.

BE: That's where Jack Shigematsu used to work.

MM: Yeah, but way before that used to be Toichi [Hamasaki], a different guy. Jack Shigematsu is way later on. And then, his job is to give out tools and give kerosene out. You know, to the plantation people, single man, they give the five-gallon can. Now days, you no see even the gallon can.

BE: What time did you start work, then, if you had to get up four o'clock?

MM: Who?

BE: Plantation people?

MM: Well, when the bell ring, they'll get up. And then, because lot of them, they got to cook in the morning. And then, five o'clock, the locomotive's up here. The locomotive toot the whistle, too.

BE: So you have to ride on the train at five o'clock already?

MM: No. Five-thirty. The locomotive come up before five, make ready for five o'clock; he blows the whistle. And then, 5:30, people go onto the cane car. And then, go out work. And then, who stay near to the railroad track where the train passes and unload the labor, if their working place is right close, he got to start work before the sun rise, see? And then, who stay to the end of the track, and from the end of the track he still got to walk maybe about a mile before he reach to the place where he work, [he starts later]. In the morning it's all right. But in the afternoon when pau hana, they pau hana four o'clock. And then if the guy had to walk one mile and come to the station--well, we no call it "station," because every place where the working people come, well, the train got to stop and pick up those guys.

The train start from way down Māhā'ulepū where the pump is. From there, he come, come, come, come, pick up. Every place get fellas waiting, he got to pick 'em up. From four o'clock, [it takes a] lot of time to reach over here by the Kōloa crossing, maybe about 5:30 or so. And you know, short days already, almost sundown already.

WN: A long day, yeah?

MM: Long day, yeah, long day. Because most of the fellas, when dark he go out. And when they come back, it's almost dark again.

WN: How far away did you folks live from the railroad?

MM: Oh, where we live was short, near place. Maybe from here to the school up here.

WN: So couple hundred yards, then?

MM: Yeah, yeah.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

BE: . . . work, eh?

MM: Six days a week.

BE: Only one day rest.

MM: See, if you got to go through that now, today people, I think, they no live till fifty. You know, those days, Japanese people used to say, "Ningen wazuka gojū nen." ["Human life lasts a mere fifty years."] But if you had to go through all that today, you no going last till you fifty. (Chuckles) Maybe by the time you be forty, you gone already. (Chuckles)

WN: So you folks lived in Japanese Camp?

MM: Yeah. Japanese Camp.

WN: So, actually, your father made a transfer then from McBryde to Kōloa?

MM: Well, I don't think transfer. I think his own will, he came over here, see. It's not like some jobs that when they get transferred, the company, where you going to, they furnish all your expenses and everything. But no, in those days, if you like move from one place to another, well, you gotta see your own transportation, everything. So it's hard. And then, not only that. They never get truck or anything. You know, the small little carriage? So, big family, how many trips you gotta go back and forth. And it's not near from Lāwa`i Stable to here.

(Laughter)

WN: Was your house bigger in Kōloa than Lāwa`i?

MM: No. When we first came, was smaller.

BE: But after you moved to the river side . . .

MM: Yeah, that was big house.

BE: That was a big house, yeah?

MM: Yeah, that was big house.

BE: Big yard.

MM: Yeah, yeah. Big yard and big house.

BE: A lot of trees--mango trees and . . .

MM: We had mangos, pears. We had orange. And then, wī apple, rose apple, banana. We had lot of fruits. And then, the yard was big, so we had lot of room for make garden and anything.

WN: Your father had same kind jobs from when he moved?

MM: No. He had to work in the cane field. Oh, when I came over here, after I started to work, I used to raise bee, too. You know the honeybee? And I used to get honey. So, I had kind of plenty boxes. Maybe I had about ten boxes already, and I thought to myself, "Hey, if I gonna do this all by hand, gonna be big job." So what I did, I ordered what they call "extractor," you know. A big fifty-gallon drum like. And in there, get the top of the drum, and then they get one bar go right across. And on the bar get two big fan like this on each side. And on the fan, it's made like this, see, where you can put your bee frame inside. Inside, one, and then the other side. So in other words, you can put two inside, two frames. And then, outside the drum, has a crank like this. So, you put your cone inside there--the beehive cone--and then you crank the thing. You know, it's simply made, but it's a wonder, you know. That thing spins around inside, eh? And the honey all fly out, you know.

BE: Oh, it's an extractor.

MM: Yeah, extractor. So you gotta crank 'em pretty fast, see. The faster you make it, better it is 'cause that thing going to fly 'em out, fly 'em out. And that thing is good, you know why, too? It's fast. And after you get through, you can put the thing right back into the box where the bees going to put the honey in again. The hive is right there, see. In other words, if you no more that [i.e., the extractor], you gotta cut off that thing [i.e., the hive], put 'em inside a bag and squeeze 'em, eh? You broking up all the hives, you know. Because you going to cut 'em off and put 'em in a bag and squeeze 'em. But the extractor, no, the hive is still there. So only the bee, what they gotta do, is fill up honey.

WN: They don't have to make the hive again?

MM: They don't have to make the hive.

WN: Oh, you invented that?

MM: No, I ordered that. Because I used to get the Sears Roebuck

catalog. And inside there, it shows the extractor. You like order the box, you can order the box. If you like buy the frame, they get the frame. The cone is made already, but it's flat, see. It's flat and then that thing is not smooth. So, the bees, when they come, they gotta make [honey] on both sides, yo. This thing is going to be in the center. This wax going be in the center, and then the bee gotta build up on both sides. After they build up, then they got to fill up the honey. [They have] what they call this "excluder." You know, the first box, they get all the bees inside and the queen is in there, see. The queen. And the main purpose for the excluder is to keep the queen from coming up. If the queen come up, she is going to lay eggs in all those places, too. You no want the queen lay the eggs because on top is for the honey. So the queen, you like 'em stay all the time down. That's why you get the excluder. The queen is little bit bigger than the working bee. So the queen cannot come up here because the screen is made only [large enough] for the working bee to come up, see.

WN: How old were you when you did this?

MM: I was maybe about sixteen, seventeen.

WN: How did you get interested in that?

MM: Well, I had a Portuguese friend and he had bees. Oh, he had maybe about half a dozen boxes. And he asked me if I like. I tell 'em, "Ah, I don't know how to raise this thing."

"No, it's only easy. You wen look. You wen look how I take the honey."

"Yeah, yeah, I wen look, but I kinda scared. I no wanna get sting from the bee."

"No, after a while, you not going get scared."

So, what you need is only the smoker and the mask, see. You know, the mask cover your head. It's made of screen wire, eh? You know, for the bee no come and sting your face. So I tell him, "Yeah, okay then. You give me one box then." That's how I got started.

And then, in the long run. . . . Well, first of all, how I used to get rid of the honey. Because you got to get rid of the honey, eh? You not going to just raise the bee, and then we no can eat that much honey. So, I used to sell the honey to the Filipinos. They used to get one group Filipinos, what they call "Moncados."

BE: Oh, the Filipino Federation [of America].

MM: Yeah. And those people, I don't know, they no eat certain things, you know. They no eat like the normal people eat. So, they kind of happy that I raise bees and get honey. Because looks like they live more on honey than any other food. So, for me to get rid, that's

easy. In fact, I no can keep up. (Chuckles)

WN: How did they eat it? On bread or. . . .

MM: On rice, I think. I hear they spill it on rice. You know those Filipinos, some of them, I used to work in the harvesting field, like that. The workmen in those days, they used to get breakfast at eight o'clock. Fifteen-minute breakfast. And lunch at 11:30 up to twelve, half an hour lunch. So, when I was working in the harvesting field, I see the Filipinos, in the morning, they eat up all their okazu. Why I know they eat up all their okazu, they stay put water inside [their lunch cans], and they stay rinse 'em, and they stay throw away the water. So, that means they no more okazu already for lunch. The rice, they [keep] for lunch, yet. And then, during the lunch, once in a while, I go around and I see those fellas. They stay peeling the cane. And what they do is, they squeeze 'em, put 'em in the rice. That's how they eat the rice. That's why, in those days, you see Filipinos, lot of them, they get beriberi, you know. You press on the leg like this, that [flesh] go inside and it no come out. And I tell them, "Oh, that man get beriberi."

"Yeah?"

"Oh, how he can pau that beriberi?"

"Oh, I hear they go eat mungos. Yeah, they eat mungos, mungos all the time, pau."

"Oh, what kind is that, mungos?"

"Oh, da kine small beans."

You know that small beans?

WN: Oh, the mungo beans?

MM: Yeah, mungo beans.

WN: Yeah, yeah. Oh, not mongoose.

(Laughter)

MM: Yeah. And they get cured.

WN: Oh, yeah? Oh, protein, that's why, eh? Got protein in the mungo beans. [Beriberi is a deficiency disease marked by inflammatory or degenerative changes of the nerves, digestive system, and heart and caused by the lack of or inability to assimilate thiamine.]

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then, why they get beriberi, because they eat only starch, eh? Yeah, in those days. That's why, you know, everybody been going through really hardship, you know.

WN: You know, you folks had ten kids, right, in the family?

MM: Yeah.

WN: How you folks survived?

MM: That's why I say, we gotta work early. Before, we no get chance to go high school. But up to the time when I started to work, I don't know, the old man really had hard time. Oh, my mother used to be a cook. She used to cook for several guys. You know, in those days, they get lot of single people, eh? And then, some people, you cook, and then they come and eat at your place. And then, they pay so much a month.

In some places, like over here in Kōloa, especially like [New] Mill Camp like that, lot of the ladies used to go wash clothes. And they charge only about dollar a month, you know. Dollar a month, but every weekend, the husband or the wife gotta go and collect all the dirty clothes. So in other words, that's four weekends they gotta go. So one weekend, looks like they only making two bits [twenty-five cents per customer], you know. Go collect the clothes, wash 'em, and they deliver back only for quarter. Why quarter? [Workers were paid] only one dollar a day. And in fact, I think, lot of guys, they never even pay. Why they never pay? Because before the month over, maybe they run away to other places.

(Laughter)

WN: Is that to iron 'em, too?

MM: Yeah, they iron 'em, too.

WN: Your mother didn't do that?

MM: No, no. My mother didn't do that. That was kinda later on when they had kinda lot of Filipinos already here. When we moved here, you know.

WN: So when you moved here, had . . .

MM: Had Filipinos. Had a quite a bit Filipinos already. But when I was that side [Lāwa'i], hardly no Filipinos.

WN: And most of the Filipinos were bachelors, huh?

MM: Yeah, yeah, most of them was bachelors.

WN: So the people she cooked for were mostly Filipinos?

MM: No, no, no, no. Japanese fellas. Yeah, because I say, on the other side where I was born, hardly no Filipinos there. Only one Filipino, that's what I say, the one had the gun, eh? (Chuckles)

WN: Any other jobs your mother and father did to support you folks?

MM: When we was on the other side [Lāwa'i], we used to raise pig. Even when we came this side [Kōloa]. When we moved [to] the big house, we was raising pig. On the other side, we no more place to raise pig, eh?

BE: Yeah, yeah. That's right.

MM: But although, if you really like to raise pig, you could. You know why? Lot of this camp people, they used to go by the river, by the ditch. You know. . . . Probably you don't know.

BE: On the road to Waitā?

MM: Yeah! On the road to Waitā. They get a ditch coming down, eh? Lot of fellas, they used to make their pigpen alongside the ditch, you know. And from the camp, they used to carry their can and go feed the pigs, those days. And then, those days, the people wasn't so bad, eh? But if you go do that today, you won't find the pig the next day.

(Laughter)

BE: Oh, that's right, yeah?

MM: I don't know if you know who Shigeru is. Matsumoto.

BE: Oh, yeah.

MM: Yeah. He used to get one big pigpen. His pigpen was kinda modern, yo. Why I say "modern," he had 'em big and he had 'em all cement floor, you know. That's the first one I see with cement floor.

BE: Oh, that was modern.

MM: Yeah, that was kinda modern. (Chuckles)

WN: When you first moved Kōloa, you folks had electricity?

MM: No.

WN: Running water?

MM: No. We had running water, but wasn't so efficient, no? And then, when we first came, they had what they call "furo place," you know, furoba.

BE: Each house didn't have their own . . .

MM: No, no. They didn't get their own. And even water, they used to get one big water tank. And people used to go get their water there. Lot of fellas. Some places, they had the water pipe, but

that slow water, only trickle, eh? And furo, lot of fellas used to go the furo, you know, the big furo.

BE: Yeah, in the camp, yeah?

MM: Yeah, in the camp.

WN: And they pay so much?

MM: They pay so much.

BE: I think was dollar a month, I think.

MM: Yeah, something like that. Dollar. When we say "dollar," look like nothing, eh? But those days, you got to work one full day for make the dollar, you know. You got to work almost ten hours for the dollar. (Chuckles) So dollar was really precious, you know. Yeah.

WN: So had somebody who took care of the furo?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. A fella. The fella who take care the furo. They get a job, too, because they gotta take care the firewood, eh? They supposed to get lot of firewood all the time. So, that's not too easy, too.

BE: Well, that's their side business, that's why, no?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

BE: I remember Iseri family used to have.

MM: Yeah, but before Iseri--Iseri was way behind already. Yeah, yeah. Yoshida or something, before.

BE: Yeah, we used to go to that Iseri's furo, yeah, before we had our own, you know.

MM: Yeah. Plenty fellas used to go that furo.

WN: And electricity, what? No more?

MM: No more. All lantern. [Kerosene] lamp. Not lantern but--of course, they had lantern, too. You know, no more flashlight. You like you go people place, you go put the lantern and go. But the lamp, you know, in the house. Every day you got to clean the chimney. You got to fill up oil, make ready for the night, eh? (Chuckles)

BE: When did we have electricity?

MM: Yeah, way later on. I no remember that. (Chuckles)

WN: So the plantation supplied the kerosene?

MM: Yeah.

WN: What else did the plantation supply?

MM: Firewood. For family fellas. . . . No, even for family, either side, you going to choose. If you like firewood, you get firewood. If you like kerosene, you get kerosene. But you no get both. Like us, we get both because you know why? We get several guys was working [for the plantation], see.

WN: Your family?

MM: Yeah, my family. That's why, we get firewood, we get kerosene. I think we had two can kerosene. Two can, what I mean is two five-gallon can.

WN: A month?

MM: Yeah. And the firewood, they used to haul 'em with the dump car, you know. The dump car is (chuckles) just enough to put one cord of firewood inside. One mule pull the thing.

WN: So they gave you folks both because you had big family? Plus . . .

MM: Big family. Plus several guys working from one family. If only one fella working for one fella, that's different already. You only get one choice, that's all. (Chuckles) Either you get firewood or you get the kerosene. But I think we get three guys working in the family, so we can get kerosene and the firewood, too.

And the firewood, had one old Portuguese guy, you know, go deliver firewood. And this Portuguese guy, he likes to drink, see. So, my mother used to give 'em the sour one. You know, Japanese used to make what they call ombo. And then, sometime it turns sour, you know. No come out good all the time. Certain time, sometimes they come sour. So she no throw away. She keep 'em all in a gallon. And then, this Portuguese guy come deliver the firewood. She give 'em one small glass. Oh, the fella feel happy, you know. Next day, he bring another load.

(Laughter)

WN: I guess in those days you can do that kind stuff, huh? What you used the firewood for?

MM: Well, for cooking.

WN: So, you didn't have kerosene stove, then?

MM: No, we didn't get kerosene stove. We had firewood stove. Wood stove. And then, we had stove outside, too, you use firewood, eh? Mainly for cook rice, like that, you cook outside. And then, we had the furo. You got to use firewood, see. That's why, the last time,

I was telling you fellas, too, we used to go cut firewood, maybe about twice a year. Once in six months or so, we go cut guava. And then, we pile up the guava. As long you cut 'em and pile 'em up and you put your tag on, oh, what number, who own that, they deliver for you, see. But that was some job, too, you know. You got to walk and go wherever you go cut. No more transportation. Then, when they deliver, they not gonna deliver just where you want 'em. So you got to carry 'em inside. After you carry 'em inside, you got to cut 'em all in length. After you cut 'em in length, you got to store 'em where you like 'em, under the shed someplace. Lot of job.

BE: You got to chop 'em.

MM: Yeah. If big one, you got to chop 'em.

WN: So, the amount that the plantation gave you a month wasn't enough sometimes?

MM: No, no 'nough, no 'nough. Because only one cord, they give. Three by three. Three [feet] high, three [feet] wide. That's all they give. And hau bush, you know, that thing burns up fast and no more strong heat.

WN: Soft, that's why, the wood.

MM: Soft. Yeah. Hau bush. (Chuckles)

WN: So, firewood, kerosene, what else?

MM: That's all. Firewood, kerosene.

WN: What about your folks' outhouse? You know, the bathroom?

BE: Toilet.

MM: Toilet? Oh, yeah. The toilet, that's a good one.

(Laughter)

MM: That's a good one. Nobody get toilet in the house. And nobody get da kine toilet that, you know, where they dig that puka, eh? They get one, they used to call 'em "ice cream box," you know. They get one toilet, and the best place is. . . . Let's say, if this was sixty, seventy years ago, our toilet would be alongside the road there, you know. And the toilet get separation, get two rooms, see. In one room get two seat. Of course, one seat, but get two hole. One big hole and one small hole. One for children, see.

(Laughter)

MM: And then, inside is made like this, and then kinda high where you sit, like this. And behind, there's a cover where you can open that thing and you put your box in.

BE: It's a flap, wooden flap. You can lift 'em up like that, and then. . . .

WN: Oh, the whole seat thing comes up?

BE: Yeah, in the back.

MM: And then, they get the box in there. And the box get two handles here.

WN: How big is the box? How deep and how . . .

MM: Ah, the box is about--mostly in those days, they use one-by-twelve. So, in other words, I think two feet.

WN: Two feet deep?

MM: Two feet deep.

BE: Yeah, about two feet deep.

MM: And then, maybe about two feet wide, I think.

BE: About that.

MM: Or maybe more. Maybe three feet wide, I think.

WN: That's for one hole or for both holes?

MM: For the both holes. For the both holes, but that's for one portion. They get two portions, see?

(Laughter)

BE: So, one toilet would take two of those containers.

MM: Yeah, two of those. And then, they used to get "ice cream man." They used to get one wagon, kinda long wagon, see. Not dump car. Dump car, if you put the damn thing, you only can put two maybe. But this one is kinda long.

BE: Yeah, it's a big wagon.

MM: A big wagon, see.

WN: Covered? Not covered?

MM: No, no covered. And two horses or two mules pull that.

BE: Big wheels, you know.

MM: Yeah. Big wheels. And get two guys. Gotta get two guys because that box, two fellas got to lift up, eh? They throw 'em on the

wagon.

BE: Yeah. That's right.

WN: How come you call 'em "ice cream man"?

(Laughter)

MM: Well, it sounds good, eh?

(Laughter)

WN: And he would come every day?

MM: No, no. Not every day. Maybe they come once a month or so.

WN: Once a month?

MM: Yeah.

BE: I think they come more often than that.

MM: More often? No, no. I think about once a month. Because they had only the two guys for the whole plantation, you know. For Kōloa side. The mill side, I don't know. But for Kōloa side, I know it's only two guys because I only see got two guys. And then, on top of that, they used to get one guy go every day throw lime. Because some guys, after they use the toilet, they no throw lime. You got to throw lime, otherwise going come real stink, see. Get one fella go all around the toilets and throw lime.

BE: Oh, yeah, they get special guys do that?

MM: Yeah.

WN: That was your own? You didn't have to share your toilet with another family?

MM: That's why I say, ours, a big family, so we had our own. Yeah, we had our own. And outside, you know. (Chuckles) Everybody. That's why, you go in the camp, you can smell them. Because they right alongside the road. (Chuckles)

WN: How many of those boxes fit onto the wagon?

MM: Ah, maybe four, five, no?

WN: Oh, so he had to make plenty trips, then?

(Mrs. Muraoka comes with refreshments.)

MM: Oh, yeah, he got to make plenty trips.

WN: And then, those men were paid by the plantation?

MM: Yeah, yeah. Those fellas paid by the plantation. Because that's all plantation job, eh? That's all plantation job.

WN: Shee, what a job, though, yeah?

MM: Oh, yeah.

WN: Where did they dump the waste? Where did they dump it?

MM: Oh, dump it? They go by Waitā. No, Burt? That's where I was telling you last time we was talking about where [Ernest] Cropp used to go hunt dove. On that road, but where the [plantation] manager was hunting his dove was further up. But on the same road, they used to dump the. . . . And way later on, they wen change the [dumping] place. I don't know if you know where the dairy was.

BE: Was more toward New Mill, eh?

MM: Yeah, yeah. More toward New Mill. From Kōloa, from where the old crossing is, if you go on the dirt road to the mill, yeah.

BE: So it's way behind of the Jardin pasture, then?

MM: Yeah, way behind. Way behind the Jardin pasture, that's right. That's right.

WN: That was the plantation dairy?

MM: Yeah. Plantation dairy. People used to buy their milk, like that, eh? And then, some, they deliver. They deliver kinda late, so lot of fellas, they used to go [to the dairy] early in the morning, go get their milk.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 15-13-2-87 and 15-14-2-87

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mitsugi (Mitaru) Muraoka (MM)

April 8, 1987

Kōloa, Kaua'i

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Burt Ebata (BE)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Mitaru Muraoka on April 8, 1987 at his home in Kōloa. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Burt Ebata.

So, last time, we were talking about the camp that you were living, huh?

MM: Yeah.

WN: So, you know, what did you folks do as kids to have good fun in the [Kōloa] Japanese Camp?

MM: In the camp, well, what I used to do [was] bet marble. Bet marble, and then we play top, no? Yeah, today kids, you no see them play top. Probably they don't know what is marble, even. We used to get marble. We make hole, you know. Sometimes we bet with the fish. We make a fish picture, eh? And then, we bet maybe ten-ten. Well, I put ten, other fella put ten. If three fellas, well, three fellas put ten inside the fish, see. And then, who knock the marble out from the fish, you take for you, see.

WN: How come had to draw one fish?

MM: Well, you make a fish so that, you know, it look nice. Then you put your marble inside.

(Laughter)

WN: And the tops, what, you folks made your own?

MM: No, we used to buy. But the one we buy, the head stay funny kind, you know. A top like this, and then the head come up like this. In the center get that knob, eh, where we put the string inside and it went around. But we cut off the second stage and we make our own head.

BE: Yeah, that's right. I remember that.

WN: So, when you make your own, it's better? Spins better?

MM: Yeah, looks better, no? You feel better, too. (Chuckles)

BE: Oh, sometimes, they used to fight with that, you know. They change that nail.

MM: Yeah, we put longer nail.

BE: Sharp nail, eh?

MM: Yeah. And then, when we fight means you put down your top, and then the other fella going to try hit your top, see. And then, it change around. The other fella put his top and you hit 'em so many times, eh? (Chuckles) And then, the top, we used mostly just to spin. Spin and then play. But the marble, we used to play in the fish, we used to make one, two, three [holes in the ground], and one on each side--that's four, five, and one more in the back there, six. Who go inside [each] hole first and come back is the winner. And then, we used to make one big ring, and then we used to put so many marbles in the center. And we used to shoot 'em out, too. Because lot of time, if you get pretty good aim, you going shoot, but the marble only going spread out, see. And the ring is kind of big, so the marbles, very few maybe might fly out. You lucky if fly out. But lot of them go to the edge, and then you get chance for hit 'em out. (Chuckles)

WN: And when you hit somebody else's marble out, you keep 'em?

MM: Yeah, you keep 'em. All what you hit out, you keep 'em. And not only that. Somehow, if that other fella's kini stay inside there, you can hit his kini out and he got to refund all the marbles he been taking. I don't know how it was. Maybe the last round when we get only one left. When you get only one left, you can shoot your marble right close to the one in the ring, you know. You can shoot 'em right close to the ring, so that when your next chance come, it stay close, you can hit 'em out. But you're taking a chance because if the other fella going hit your kini out from the ring, you got to refund all the [marbles] you been taking. (Chuckles) That's one chance you're taking, see. Yeah, I think that's how it was.

WN: So you lose your kini, then that's it, then?

MM: Yeah, yeah. But that's kind of hard, eh? You know, the ring is kind of big, see. Yeah, that was lot of fun, though. Marble and top. Then, once in a while, play master like that, too, eh?

WN: What about things like fishing? Hunting or fishing?

MM: Well, hunting and fishing, when we started work. I started fishing early. I used to go fishing even when I was still going school. But hunting, no, because hunting, they don't allow youngsters, eh? You have to be certain age so that you can get your permit shooting.

To buy a gun, too, eh? You got to be, I don't know, was eighteen, I think. So, anyway, I started to hunt when I was maybe about twenty or so.

And those days, used to be plenty birds. And I heard the [territory] used to release the pheasants, you know. About three months before the hunting, they used to release the cocks. Because the hens are plenty, yeah? And that was good because when we start to go hunt, well, lot of pheasant. The hunting start November. You can hunt every day. During the weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, you can. But today, you can only hunt weekends and holidays, that's all. And they allow you only three birds a day. But those days, lot of time, especially like weekend like that, we go. During the week, we only go in the afternoon sometime when the weather is good. But weekend, sometimes we go in the morning. We shoot three in the morning. And then, in afternoon, you take a rest, you have lunch, and maybe you start again maybe about 1:30, two o'clock, you shoot another three. Lot of time. Not every time, though. Yeah, when you get luck, eh?

WN: Only pheasant you used to hunt?

MM: Yeah, only pheasant. And I used to get good hunting dog, too. Yeah, when you go hunting, I don't know about goats and. . . . Pig, you need dog. I hear, pig, you need about three, four dogs. But like pheasant, you get one dog, that's plenty. But the dog knock out too, you know. You go in the morning, and then you go in the afternoon, ah, pau. The dog, he no go in front. He go little bit, he sit down, yo.

(Laughter)

MM: Sit down, and you coach 'em, coach 'em, eh? Then he start to stand up and start to walk. You can see 'em already, knock out, you know. He just go slow walk, eh? (Laughs) I think to myself, "This is no good already. More better we go home."

(Laughter)

MM: And sometimes, the car stay long way away, you know. And then, (chuckles) so I tell, "Ah, more better we go home." So, I start to go home. And the dog, he come little bit, he sit down, he go little bit, he sit down. He no can follow me. That's why, throw 'em on my back, yo. I carry the dog. (Laughs) I no can be waiting, waiting for the dog, eh?

WN: Where did you go hunting?

MM: All around the Waitā side. You know where is Waitā?

WN: Yeah.

MM: All around the Waitā. Well, I go early in the morning just before

the sun rise. That's why, the dog, they knock out, you know. You know the buffalo grass? The grass is high, eh? They got to jump, jump, and knock out, you know. They tired, eh? Well, usually, when the bird is in the tall grass, when the dogs jump like this, the bird hear the noise, eh? So they scared, they fly up. And then, you shoot 'em. And when you shoot 'em. . . . You know why I tell my dog was good? When the bird come up, lot of time, he stand up with his hind leg, you know. And he watch where the [bird] go. And then, you go like that, pom! pom! When he see the bird fall down, chee, the dog happy, though. (Chuckles) Yeah. You can see how he wiggle his tail and go. Yeah, you can tell, you know. (Chuckles) But when you miss 'em, he turn back. He turn back at you, you good-for-nothing.

(Laughter)

MM: You got good dog, eh? Yeah, they smart.

WN: What about things like holidays in the camps?

MM: Oh, yeah. Holidays, when we used to be very young, you know Dr. Waterhouse? He used to talk over with the plantation and get the locomotive, yo. And get several cars, cane cars. And especially like Fourth of July, like that. They used to start from over here where they call "old mill," eh? Right in front of Sueoka Store. The train start from there. Then who wants to get on top, they go. And then, the train goes further on, little bit more that side and stop there, too. Because some people waiting there, too. Wherever get people waiting, the train stop and pick 'em up. But the thing is, they go through the [New] Mill Camp, pick up all those guys, and then go down. But where the train stop, far away from the beach, yo. They used to take us all the time down Po`ipu Beach. But the train stop way on top, you know, because the railroad track is further way up, eh? And we got to walk about a mile [down to the beach], you know.

WN: Oh, yeah?

MM: Yeah. (Chuckles) And then, we go down the beach, and then Waterhouse and lot of volunteers, they stay over there. You know, the grown-up people. And they make all kind of games, races, tug-of-war, and all da kine.

BE: Yeah, that was a big event, yeah?

MM: Yeah, big event, you know, on the Fourth of July.

WN: Had food over there?

MM: Well, mostly cold drink, eh?

WN: Oh, that's nice, yeah?

MM: Not like now. Now days, if you get things like that, you get the lunch wagon like that, eh? But those days, no. And whole day affair, you know. Very few fellas go with car because hardly no car. The one go with car, they all right. They go right close to the beach, eh? But the one who go with the train, they got to walk about a mile. (Chuckles)

WN: Christmastime, what?

MM: Christmastime, I no remember good if Christmastime they used to go down the Po'ipū Beach, too. You remember?

BE: I don't think so.

MM: Mainly was Fourth of July, no?

BE: Yeah. That's the big event.

WN: What did you folks used to do New Year's time?

MM: New Year's and Christmas, I don't know. They had some kind of fair. Churches, they used to get, you know. They used to get kids and they give 'em candy, orange, apple, like that. But I don't know. I didn't go to the church. But I notice lot of people used to go for candies and things like that.

WN: And what about Tenchō-setsu?

MM: Tenchō-setsu, the Japanese[-language] school they used to get some kind of celebration.

BE: They had undō-kai, yeah?

MM: Yeah.

BE: Track meets and . . .

MM: Yeah, track meet.

BE: . . . lot of sports. Yeah, that was a big event.

MM: Yeah.

BE: They had food for sale, too.

MM: Yeah.

WN: So, you went up to eighth grade at Kōloa School?

MM: Yeah.

WN: And then, after finish eighth grade, what did you do?

MM: Work. Work in the plantation.

WN: Full time?

MM: Full time. What I mean, full time is from Monday to Saturday, you know. Six days and about nine hours a day.

BE: Saturdays, too, eh?

MM: Saturdays, yeah. Only that forty hours wen come way later on, you know. Yeah, forty hours came way, way later on.

WN: What was your pay, first time you started?

MM: That's why I say, well, when I was going school over here yet, when I was sixth, seventh, eighth grade like that, I used to get only thirty cents. Thirty cents a day, you know.

BE: A day?

(Laughter)

WN: That's because you were boy?

MM: Well, because you boy, because you young, eh? Even the old-timers, when I first started to work, the old people used to only get seventy-five cents.

BE: The men?

MM: Yeah, the men. The dollar [a day] came later on. Yeah.

WN: So, in 1920 when you started [full time], what, was seventy-five cents?

MM: The men, I think, they had one dollar already. Because I didn't go on day-work basis. I all look for this piecework. Piecework, we call it "contract," yo. You know, so much you do, that's what you get paid for, see. Like I used to go cut seed, I used to go throw fertilizer. And then, when the harvesting starts, I go hapai ko. Yeah. All time on piecework. The seed cutting, used to get ten cents a bag. Same thing as the fertilizer, ten cents a bag. But the fertilizer and the seed, too, it depends. Like now, the seed, what you call the "top seed." The top seed is where you cut only the top, you know. But today, I no see they cut top seed. They all from the root. They keep the cane maybe about five, six months old, when the cane get about that big.

WN: About what? Four feet? Five feet?

MM: Yeah, around there. They cut all from the ground, and then from one cane, they take about four, five seeds. But in a way, that way good too, because the plantation can pay 'em cheaper, eh? The top seed,

because you're going to cut one by one, one by one. Takes time, eh? So you got to pay more.

And then, the fertilizer, too, certain fields you throw maybe eight bags an acre. And certain fields, you throw six bags an acre. And some fields, maybe you throw more than eight bags an acre. So, there's a difference already. So, you know, the more bags per acre, you get cheaper rate, then. That's how it goes.

WN: So you got paid by the bag of fertilizer that you put out?

MM: Yeah.

WN: Cut seed was . . .

MM: Same thing. You got to . . .

WN: . . . how many bags you . . .

MM: How many bags you fill up, no?

WN: How heavy was one bag?

MM: Oh, I would say, maybe about fifty, sixty pounds. But that depends on the bag, too. Sometime they get big bag, you know. Sometime, they get narrow bag. (Chuckles) And then, the narrow bag, some people, they smart how they fill up the bag, you know. They no put 'em all--line up all good. No. Of course, you got to throw 'em all kind of ways. But yet, the bag looks nice, you know.

(Laughter)

WN: So, they never pay you by the poundage? By just the bag . . .

MM: No, no, not by the pound. By the bag.

(Laughter)

MM: So you got to be smart, eh?

WN: So, if you pack 'em good, then you lose out, then?

MM: Yeah, you lose out. Sure, you lose out.

(Laughter)

WN: How long took you to cut one bag?

MM: Seed? Ah, maybe about half an hour, forty minutes. We try hustle up in the morning, <u>yo</u>. And in the afternoon, already come about one, two o'clock already, ah, we stall around. Just kill time, eh?

WN: Do you remember your first day on the job?

MM: I no remember. (Chuckles)

WN: So when you first started, you cut cane, fertilizer . . .

MM: No, I never cut cane. I never cut cane. First job was cut seed, no? Cut seed, throw fertilizer, hāpai kō. I don't know if, maybe, for that reason now, I feel pain all time on my shoulder.

WN: How did they pay you folks, hāpai kō?

MM: Quarter [twenty-five cents], one ton. And then, we used to make fairly good-sized car [i.e., large load] because the plantation, they like we make fairly good-sized car, see. Otherwise, if we make small car, the more cars they got to haul in and haul out. So if you make fairly good-sized car, you know, the more tonnage you taking out, see, per car. So, we make about two ton, three ton. And then, we make bigger car, bigger than three tons sometime, whenever the car is getting less, yo. Sometime during the day, if the mill get trouble like that, they don't grind, that's why the car is fill up with cane, eh? So, less cars coming out [from the mill]. Da kine time, well, we know already, ey, the mill get trouble. Only few cars. We watch the locomotive. When we can see the locomotive, ey, only few cars came [back to the fields]. And when the few cars come, how we used to work is, majority of the fellas, we get what they call piler boys, see. And then, when the cars getting less and less, when we not quite finished, when we get, oh, maybe one side more to go, we let the piler boy go [and wait for the cane car to arrive from the mill]. "Ey, you go over there and take the place already." What I mean "take the place" is, we know already what track the cars coming in on, eh? So the first ones go over there, wait for the car. So, if only one car come, you the first one, you going get that car. But there going to be lot of fellas lining up, see. (Chuckles) The first ones come, they get the best chance, eh? That's why, before you finish, you send your piler boy go take the line already. (Chuckles)

WN: Oh, I see.

BE: All kind of tricks, yeah?

MM: Yeah. Otherwise, if you going to be waiting, waiting till you finish the line, well, you not going get chance.

WN: And since you getting paid piecework, you got to get your car, right?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, you got to get car all time.

WN: So, had somebody checking how much you putting in or. . . .

MM: Putting in for. . . .

WN: As you putting the cane in, what, then it has your name on it or

something?

MM: No, no. Yeah. They get what they call "ticket boys." And every car has a small little pocket, you know. And the ticket boy goes over there, what number of the car, what company. We all get company. I company 1, company 2, company 3, so-and-so company. So-and-so company wen load that car. And then, what field, what date. Then he poke 'em inside the pocket. And then, that cars go up to the mill. And up the mill, they get a fella to check all that, see. Who's been loading that car and everything.

WN: Oh, I see. What if somebody's real fast and somebody's real slow and one car gets filled up and one car still half empty, what happen? What you do?

MM: (Chuckles) Well, that's where the supervisor go ahead and rush 'em, eh? Because he holding up the line. Maybe the whole line, maybe thirty, forty cars, is almost all finish, and they get only couple slow buggers over there. That's why, most time, da kine slow guys, already the supervisor know da kine guys. So when he go take the car, he shift 'em behind, yo. No let 'em come in front because he going hold up the line. He tell 'em, "Ey, you go take behind." When he go take behind one, not so bad, because he stay way behind, eh? Because lot of time, you get single guy, because maybe his partner lay off. And then, if my piler boy, and if Burt lay off, his piler boy get no more partner, see. So, I can take his piler boy. Then, it going to even up, eh? But sometime no come out like that. Sometime you get no more piler boy and only the hapai ko man get. So da kine time, he no more partner, so he let 'em go behind. Otherwise, he going hold up the line, eh?

WN: So, if your piler boy no show up, then you lose out then? You get less money, then?

MM: Well, not say less money, because even your piler boy no more, if you work hard, you going to . . . . Because if only yourself, you not working for the piler boy. What you doing is only for you, see.

WN: How much do you pay the piler boy?

MM: That's why, I used to pay dollar quarter [$1.25]. And then, after a year or so, my piler boy tell me, "Ey, the fella like give me dollar thirty [$1.30] cents, you know. I going with him."

"No, no, no, no, no. If he give you dollar thirty cents, I give you dollar thirty cents."

"Oh, then I stay."

Been come up to dollar thirty-five [$1.35].

(Laughter)

WN: You pay 'em dollar thirty-five, and how much you would take home?

MM: I would take home about two and a half [$2.50]. I would try and make maybe about eighteen tons per day. Average for the month. About eighteen to twenty.

WN: How many cars is that?

MM: Well, how many cars is that? Well, if eighteen ton, even if you give three tons are six cars, eh? But you no going average three tons [per car]. Maybe two tons, two and a half, no? That's why, you load maybe about seven, eight cars. So, now, if you average eighteen ton, you times eighteen by twenty-five [working days per month], and then you minus that dollar thirty cents [to pay the piler boy], the rest I get 'em, see.

But (chuckles) they took me for that supervisor's job for, oh, over thirty-five years.

WN: Had some husband-and-wife teams?

MM: Yeah, they used to get. And then, they used to carry the baby.

BE: Hah? Yeah?

MM: Well, those days, mostly Japanese. Of course, they had few Filipinos, but. The Japanese, the ladies, they get small child, they carry the baby, go.

WN: On the back?

MM: On the back. And they work. When the baby is fussy, well, she carry on the back. But when the baby come sleepy, they put 'em by the car. Kind of shade, eh? Put 'em down.

WN: So the women were mostly piler boy?

MM: Yeah, yeah. Piler boy. Had one family right close to our place, Kiyohara. I don't know if you remember those guys, Kiyohara. And then, they used to get one couple from 'Aipo. They wen move to Spanish Camp. One tall, husky-looking Japanese man. And nice couple. They had child, too. She used to bring the child, too.

WN: If you have your wife as piler boy, then you make that much more money, then.

MM: Yeah, yeah. Because all the money going to you. You know, today people, they tell they work hard. (Chuckles) They make you laugh.

(Laughter)

MM: They make you laugh. They don't know what is hard. They don't know what is hard work. Well, but they think we was crazy, too, you

know, (chuckles) going through all that, eh?

WN: No choice, though, huh?

MM: No choice. No choice. Really no choice. If you no like work, you going be loafer. What you get? You no get nothing. Yeah, no choice.

WN: So, when you first started, you were giving the money to the family?

MM: Yeah, all to the family. And you know how much (chuckles), I shame to tell. He used to give me only dollar a month. (Laughs)

WN: To spend?

MM: Yeah. And I used to go movies with short pants, you know. I only paid ten cents.

(Laughter)

MM: That's the only way you can do. What you going do with dollar?

WN: Which movie theater did you go?

MM: We used to go two theaters. One theater by the Japanese[-language] school. The old one.

BE: Yeah.

MM: And then, over here.

WN: You mean the one by Sueoka [built in 1936]?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BE: Yeah, but in the old days, you remember, they had that [theater] by Ah Tai [Lau's] place?

MM: Where?

BE: You know where the. . . .

WN: [Kōloa] Ice House?

BE: [Kōloa] Ice House is now?

MM: Oh, oh, [Kōloa] Ice House. Yeah, I know that. I know that. Shinagawa.

BE: Was pretty good theater.

MM: Yeah, yeah. And then, who used to run that movie, [Sadakichi] Iwamura.

BE: Yeah, Iwamura, yeah.

MM: Yeah. Iwamura used to get one old Cadillac, you know. Cadillac. And he used to run the . . .

BE: Generator.

MM: . . . generator with the Cadillac. Yeah. And then, they used to bring shibai guys, too. Those days, get plenty shibai guys, you know. And then, they used to stay Yamaka's place.

BE: Oh, Yamaka [a.k.a., Yamashiroya] Hotel.

MM: Yeah, Yamaka Hotel. And then, later on, that Iwamura made an upstairs building where he can keep [i.e., house] the shibai people.

BE: Oh, that's why? That's right next to Bob Oda's place, you know. Now, they have a modern home there. But Iwamura family used to live there. They used to own that property. So I remember that big two-story.

WN: When you first started, did you get along with your lunas?

MM: Yeah, I used to get along. Because they used to like me. I not boasting, but they used to like me. Because why? Because I try to work hard. I try to work hard. Because now days, the old people, they not living already. Even I go kālai, (chuckles) I stay ahead of them so they mad me, you know. Yeah, they mad me. They say, "Why you want to work so hard for?" (Laughs)

WN: Kālai, how you got paid kālai?

MM: Kālai, well, very seldom I go kālai. That's why I say, when I go kālai was when no more no other piecework. That's the only job we can get. But I used to get dollar a day.

WN: Oh, just day work?

MM: Yeah, day work.

WN: What about rainy days? Did you hāpai kō when it was raining?

MM: Yeah, rainy days, you hāpai kō. All wet. (Chuckles) Hāpai kō, kālai, too. Very seldom we go home, no? That's why, today, you no see people they carry raincoat and go work. Those days, everybody get raincoat, they go.

BE: Work in the rain, yeah?

MM: Yeah, work in the rain. Because as long get job, the plantation don't send you home. Of course, when it get too bad already, the plantation send you home. Then they bring the truck or the train. But otherwise, you like go home, you got to walk. They not going

come pick you up. Terrible, no, those days?

WN: So in those days, when you started, they were burning cane?

MM: Yeah, yeah. Burning cane, I don't know [about] other places. Other places, some places, maybe, they get men strip the 'ōpala, eh? That's why, they get that song, eh? Some places, they get song, you know.

WN: Hole hole bushi?

MM: Yeah, hole hole bushi. Yeah, yeah. (Laughs) That's the one, hole hole.

WN: But Kōloa . . .

MM: No, Kōloa, always burn. Yeah. Always burn.

WN: So, must have been real dirty, yeah?

MM: Yeah! You know, it's hard to explain. But when nice hot days, when they burn the cane, you know from the joints, something like molasses come out, you know.

BE: Yeah, the juice, yeah?

MM: The juice. And you carry the cane and all stick over here, you know.

WN: On your neck . . .

MM: On your neck because you're hāpai kōing, eh? (Chuckles) And that thing over here, with that molasses, all come hard, thick. Only time I change clothes [was] on the third day. Wednesday, I change clothes. Monday, it's good because clean clothes, eh? All right, Tuesday morning, what my mother used to do, the lantern.

WN: Kerosene lantern?

MM: Yeah, kerosene lantern. I get over there [MM points to old kerosene lantern]. She used to light that and put my clothes on there to warm up the thing.

BE: To warm up the clothes?

MM: You know, the day before, you all sweat and sticky and everything, eh? You know, it's hard to wear that thing, you know. Yeah, but if you warm 'em up, you feel little bit better.

WN: So, you only had one shirt?

MM: No, I had lot of shirts, yeah, but that's why I say, only Monday and Wednesday we change, eh? We no can change every day. And then, you

know, you pity your old lady. Not like today, you get washing machine. Oh, those days, all go like this [by hand], eh? You no want see your mother [wash] every day.

BE: Yeah, that's right, boy, all by hand.

MM: By hand.

WN: What kind shirts you used to wear?

MM: Oh, thick shirt, no?

WN: Denim kind?

MM: Denim, yeah. Denim strong, eh? Denim pants, denim shirt. And some people, they used to make one da kine, eh? What you call that?

BE: Hood.

MM: Hood, yeah. Because, you know, the sticky, eh? Your neck get sticky. Yeah, they used to make. But the thing hot, I no like. You know, the thing cover your head and ear, eh? Hot, you know.

WN: About how heavy was one load of cane about?

MM: About? Ah, I was youngster and I only small guy, too, that's why, I figure maybe, I was carrying maybe seventy pound or eighty pound. Let's say even eighty pound. To load one ton, eh, how many piles you got to go up and down, you know?

WN: Two thousand pounds make one ton.

MM: Yeah. (Chuckles) And if all level like this, no so bad. But sometimes, you got to go up the hill like this, you know. (Laughs)

BE: That's what you call backbreaking work, yeah? Hoo, boy.

MM: Yeah. (Chuckles) That's why I say, today, the fellas that tell they get hard work (chuckles). Hard work?

BE: Good thing that, you know, people survived years and years, eh?

Mrs. Muraoka: That's why, we hardhead.

(Laughter)

MM: Well, that's why the head come hard, too, eh?

(Laughter)

WN: When you first started, who was the plantation manager?

MM: When I first started, the manager was--when I was still going school

and we used to go off and on go work--was [Ernest] Cropp [1913-1922]. Then it changed to John T. Moir [1922-1933]. John T. Moir was quite long. And then, Hector Moir [1933-1948] took over. [Caleb E.S. Burns served as manager of Koloa Plantation for 9-1/2 months in 1922, between Cropp and John T. Moir.]

WN: Did you get along with them?

MM: Oh, yeah, I get along with them. But usually, the manager, they don't bother with the workmen. They bother with the supervisors and all da kine big guys, eh? But with the workmen, no, they no bother.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MM: And then, he [John T. Moir] get a horse. He ride his horse, and then he go check around. (Chuckles) He bin come checking me one time, too, you know, early in the morning. Yeah, I was working down this side. I was a supervisor already that time, and was off season, see. Never get harvesting. So, I had a bunch of kalai men. He come check in the morning when you start. You know, the train leaves at the crossing. If I not mistake, the train used to leave 5:30.

(Mail carrier arrives. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: So, he came 5:30?

MM: Five-thirty, the train leave from the crossing. And if the train have to go only about quarter mile and drop some guys and happen that guy's working right close there already, he got to start to work already, you know. Dark, you know. And then, who [works] way in the end of the track, when the train stop and that fella still had to walk about half a mile yet to the working place, he going start late, eh? He going start maybe about 6:30. So, the manager, he come check, you know. Yeah, he wen come check with me one time. But good thing, I seen him first. If he seen me first, no good. (Laughs) I seen him first, see.

WN: John T. Moir?

MM: John T. Moir. On his horse, and he come inside the cane, you know. (Chuckles) But good thing, I seen him first. I tell the men, "Ey, we got to start already." Because he stay coming already, eh? (Chuckles) He was coming already, but was kinda little bit distance already. But I had a chance to wake up my men, see.

(Laughter)

WN: Did the lower supervisors like that ride horse, too?

MM: Yeah, they ride horse, too.

WN: The lunas were mostly Portuguese?

MM: Filipinos, Portuguese, yeah.

WN: Besides hāpai kō and kālai, cut seed, fertilizer, what other jobs did you have when you first started?

MM: About six months I went for truck helper. When I wen quit the hāpai kō, I wen go truck helper for about six months. Then, I wen dokata.

WN: What is dokata?

MM: Dokata is construction worker. Pick and shovel kind. Pick and shovel, cement. With Kawakami. You know, Kawakami had one gang, eh? I wen go inside there. I wen stay there for about one month.

BE: But your rate of pay higher, eh? Much higher, eh?

MM: Yeah, higher than the ordinary kālai man. They was getting about dollar and a half, yo. And there again, the Kawakami old man tell me, "You hard worker. So I giving you two dollar."

BE: Oh, yeah? Big difference, yeah? Two dollars, big money.

MM: Yeah, but he tell for tell nobody, see.

WN: This is per day? I mean, yeah, two dollars per day.

MM: But I was there only for about one year. Then I wen go to the portable track. The track man, the ones they lay track in the harvesting field. I heard they make little bit more money, eh? They make about two and a quarter, something like that, average. So, I was there for about two years. And then one day, Jack Moir wen come here. (Chuckles) He see me, yo. Was off season, eh? Off season is when no more harvesting. We was fixing rail over there. He come see me. He call me on the side. You know, I was working with the bunch, eh? Tell me if I like overseer job, supervising job.

I tell him, "What kind?"

"Harvesting."

"How much you go pay me?"

"Sixty."

"I making more than sixty now."

WN: What were you doing at the time?

MM: Track man.

WN: Portable track layer?

MM: Yeah. "Sixty-five, then."

So, I tell him, "I won't give you answer now. Let me think it over."

He said, "Okay."

So one day, a few days later, I was inside the furo, you know. And then, hey, who this guy? I don't know if you know this guy. [Clarence] Orme. We used to call him "Bunghole, Bunghole." He come inside there inside the furoba, you know. (Chuckles) I tell, "What you want?"

BE: Assistant manager [of Kōloa Plantation, 1929-39].

MM: He tell me, well, he was sent by the manager to see you.

"Yeah? What's the trouble?"

He tell me if you going to take the job.

Then I told him, "You give me seventy, I take the job."

"Yeah, okay. Okay, I give you seventy. I tell the manager. So, the next morning, you go to the stable and see the stable man. They give you the horse, see. But you have to get your own saddle, you know."

BE: You got to buy your own saddle?

MM: Yeah, yeah. You got to get your own saddle. You got to saddle your own horse. They no saddle for you. Only the big guy, assistant like that, they saddle.

BE: So you have to buy that from the plantation store, then, eh?

MM: No.

BE: The saddle.

MM: No, not from the store. I think I bought from George Maile. He used to get horse, and then he used to get couple old saddles. I bought from him.

WN: So, how many years were you working plantation before you got the overseer job?

MM: Four, five, seven, eight. . . . About eight, nine years, no?

WN: Around 1928, '29?

MM: Yeah. . . .

WN: But before the war then?

MM: Yeah, before the war.

BE: Oh, yeah, way before the war.

MM: Yeah, way before the war. Oh, we was talking about hunting one time. I used to go hunting every weekend and even afternoons, you know, when good weather. The Sunday morning when we heard that the war wen break out, we never believe was, you know. We just wen go hunting, we wen come back, and we heard that, eh? And then, they say everybody who get gun, they have to turn in, eh? So, that was the last. From then, I never hunt. That was the last day.

WN: When you became overseer, you know, you became supervisor, right, over the men. Did they treat you differently, anything like that?

MM: Who? The men?

WN: Yeah.

MM: Or you talking about the higher-up?

WN: No, no. The men.

MM: The men? No, no. I didn't really get into trouble with the workingmen. I used to get pretty good response from those fellas.

WN: What was your responsibility as overseer?

MM: As a overseer? You see, like hāpai kō luna, hāpai kō overseer, is first of all, as I say, we got to go stable. We got to saddle our horse and we got to be in the field before the train reach there, you know. That's why, you got to go pretty early to the stable. And then, it's kinda dark yet, eh? So, you no want to run the horse too often. Only when you know where the road is good, you can run little bit. And then you go to the field. All depend where the field. Maybe the field is far away where you harvesting, the earlier you got to go.

My job was to harvesting oversee. In harvesting, we used to get what they call "field boss," the top in the harvesting field. Then they used to get the teamster luna. They used to get me, hāpai ko luna. And they used to get three cut-cane lunas. And my job was to go to the field. The men, they jump down from the train. Some of them, they run, you know. They know it's a good place, they run, yo. Where is good place I talking, they get all kind of places. Where they see that car stay all in the level place, they got to rush and go, yo. Because the car, not so much then you going get

pali, you know. So they no want to go to the pali, eh? (Chuckles) So they run, you know. Sometime, you know, two guys grab the car same time, eh? (Laughs) "Ey, I wen come first." (Laughs) Sometime get like that, too, you know. (Chuckles)

WN: How many in one gang? How many men?

MM: Two men. Two in one gang, eh?

WN: But how many cars usually had one time?

MM: The car get in one long line. Sometime in one long line maybe get about fifty, sixty cars. And then, it's not only one line. They get several more other lines. They get some more cars, too, eh? And the teamsters is always bringing cars in and then always taking out, see. So, my job is to see that no more no trouble in the field. They grab their car and then some of them, they tell, "Ey, I think my company [i.e., partner] no more, though." If no more company, well, I go find [one for them]. See, that's my job. Sometime the loader goes over there, grab the car. But he no look his piler man, see. Then, that's up to me to find somebody. If no more piler man, you get another loader come together with this guy. And then, two loaders together, see. That's how you got to build 'em up, eh? And then, if no more partner already, he no can help. "Ey, you go behind. You no more company, you going to hold up the line there."

Then when you get your men all set, then you got to go count how many cars, yo. All right, now, if get fifty cars and if all of them get partners, you know that's hundred men already. Then, after you count the men, the field boss come around, eh? "How many men you get?"

"Oh, I get hundred men."

Then, you go back again. Your time book, you got to put down everybody, who's working, who's working, who's working, who's working. Then maybe somebody get different partners, eh? If I'm a hapai ko man and he's one hapai ko man, both of us, the piler man moemoe, all right, we put 'em to one company. My company number is ten, and the other fella maybe is company eleven. In the time book, it says that two guys been working on company ten, see. So the office going to split that, yo. Split that on that day, the two guys wen work, eh?

And you know Makoto?

BE: Yeah, Terui?

MM: Terui. Him same thing with me, you know, I think. He never go high school, you know.

BE: Yeah, I don't think he went to high school. Used to be truck driver

before.

MM: Yeah, yeah, truck driver. Long time, he was truck driver. And then he wen work office. And he's good in math, yo. He figure all that kind, you know. He used to take charge that, all the hapai ko kind. Hapai ko, all the harvesting field, anyway. Yeah, he's too good. And he used to make a report, you know. Every day, you got to make a report, yo. How many cars you wen load, how many ton you wen load. In the morning I got to give to those guys. If the person lay off, well, I keep 'em and next day I give.

And of course, all the cars no come in. If the guy loaded about, let's say, seven cars today, and the mill wen grind only five cars, the other two cars, they wen grind 'em late, yo. So that thing, the report never go to the office, see. But the guy, he got to remember. He got to keep a book, too, see. Ey, that day, only five wen come. Two car never come. In fact, if he was smart, every car, he got to jot it down, yo. Then he know what car wen come, eh? But the thing is, too, lot of time, the cane car, he huli you know.

BE: Yeah?

MM: Yeah. You know, when bad field, when pali field like that, the cane car, sometime he run away, yo. They no can control, so the thing go full speed, eh? Yeah, huli, you know.

BE: So the man take the loss?

MM: Then he take the loss. But if he know, he going tell, "Ey, my car wen huli, you know. You got to give me one double." So, the next day, you give one double. He going load one car but you put down double. So if he load two ton that car, he going get [credit for] four ton.

BE: Otherwise, not fair.

MM: Yeah, yeah. It's not only inside the field. Inside the field, we had several like that, runaway cars. Ho, runaway cars. We bin working whole night one night. One string cars wen run away, you know. About fifty cars wen run away at, ho, full speed. The brake no hold, eh? And bin hit one curve. Well, the first in front car wen huli. That's one pileup. Pileup, all the cars. To straighten 'em up, [took] the whole night. You got to straighten up because next day, you got to use the track, eh? The men going come work.

BE: That portable track, how heavy is it for the men to carry?

MM: Well, that, too, depends. On the good days when dry and no more mud on the rail, ah, I would say maybe the thing, two fella carry, yo. But two fella, get pretty good weight, you know. Maybe that thing get about 170, 180 pound, I think.

WN: How long was one piece?

MM: Twelve feet. They get two kind. Twelve and fifteen. Yeah, twelve and fifteen, they have.

WN: Had curve kind, too?

MM: Yeah, curve kind. They use the curve kind on the curve, eh? And then, even the locomotive behind Cockett [residence]. The train coming down with the cane from way on top. Yeah, they lose control, eh? They no can hold 'em.

BE: Hoo.

MM: Hoo.

BE: Turn over?

MM: Turn over, the cane cars. Not the locomotive, though. Yeah, one time over there. Right by that. . . . Who stay living there? Right by the crossing. You know, get one bridge over there, eh? Before when Kondo was living.

BE: Oh, James Kondo's house? Right over there?

MM: Yeah, right over there, too, one time. (Chuckles) Oh, I heard you fellas go talk with Louis, too, sometime?

WN: Jacintho?

MM: Yeah.

BE: Yeah, off and on. Yeah.

MM: Off and on? You two fella try ask him. He <u>wen</u> get runaway one time. He <u>wen</u> get hurt, you know. Way on top.

WN: On his head, eh?

MM: Yeah, his head.

WN: He said he has a plate in his head.

MM: Yeah. He <u>wen</u> get hurt way up <u>mauka</u>. [See interview with Louis Jacintho, Jr. for details.]

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

MM: Yeah, Louis <u>wen</u> get hurt.

WN: Anybody got killed?

MM: No. So far, lucky. Nobody got killed. Louis was lucky, too, I hear. Even on the government road like that, too, certain place where get hill like that, they get the cut like this, eh? Now, if this the road, now you imagine the (MM points) garage there is the

hill. So they got to cut 'em down like that. And then the thing bin happen right between the cut like that, you know. The train wen start run away with the cars, yo. And he stay inside the narrow place, between the car and the cut. So, if he been get dizzy or what and wen fall between the car, pau, he. . . .

BE: Oh, yeah, he gone, yeah?

MM: Goner.

WN: So when you were hāpai ko luna, when you had your horse, you didn't do hapai ko, you just supervised?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just supervise. Then when they merged, I don't know, when was that? Forty-eight?

WN: With Grove Farm? Forty-eight, yeah.

MM: When they merged, they put me as the top, the [harvesting] superintendent. I used to get three supervisors under me. Then I got to do all the work, yo. You know, like I was telling, they get field boss, huki huki luna and all kind. No. I was the top. I got to do the burning, the planning, all, everything.

WN: So, you were in charge of the burning the cane, and . . .

MM: Everything in the harvesting field.

BE: The whole harvesting operation, yeah?

MM: Yeah.

BE: Harvesting overseer.

MM: Well, actually, you can call it. . . . Some plantations, they call "harvesting superintendent."

BE: So that means your salary jumped way up, then?

MM: No, no, no. That, no. That's why, that, they forget.

(Laughter)

WN: But just before that, couple years before that, had the union [ILWU, in 1945] come in?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: What do you remember about that?

MM: Well, the union, they had, but didn't affect me too much, no?

WN: You were still a luna at the time?

MM: Yeah, I was luna at the time.

WN: You mean, didn't affect your pay too much?

MM: My pay?

WN: Yeah.

MM: Because of the union? No.

BE: The [working]men's wages would go up, so the supervisors' salary should go up too, eh?

MM: Well, I guess maybe they put, but, you know, so little, you hardly notice.

WN: So, you were considered supervisor, then, at the time?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So when I wen retire, only was making $825 [a month].

BE: What year was that?

MM: Nineteen seventy. That's seventeen years ago.

WN: What about the [1946 sugar] strike? The first strike?

MM: (Chuckles) The first strike, yeah. We used to go around, around, eh? We used to go around, check the reservoir, check the field. But we didn't get no trouble. Half the time we go around the beach side, check around the beach.

WN: Check for what?

MM: No, just for ride around, eh? (Chuckles) For spend time only.

BE: Yeah, because the strike was quite long, yeah?

MM: Yeah, quite long [seventy-nine days].

WN: So, when did they start changing the harvesting operations from, you know, the old-style hapai ko to the more modern . . .

MM: Yeah, the trucking, yo. The trucking. That was. . . . I don't know. That's why I say, I no remember all those things. That thing . . .

WN: After the war [World War II]?

MM: Oh, yeah, after the war. After the [Wilcox] Tunnel [was built]. You know, after the tunnel bin finish.

BE: Must have been about [1949] maybe, huh?

MM: Yeah. . . . Maybe something like that, no?

WN: So how did your job change?

MM: Like Kōloa side, I know mostly all the fields and the roads. I used to know, eh? But the Grove Farm side, that's new to me. So, I study the map. What fields is located where and where the road is. And the roads got to be pretty big, you know. It's not for small trucks; it's for big haul-cane trucks, see. So, I have to go check the road and see if I think the road is suitable for the big trucks. And if not, I got to report, and then have it fixed, see. And some places, you got to make a bridge or things like that, eh? That was all under my kuleana, see.

WN: So what happened to all, like the hāpai kō man and the portable-track layers, you know. How did they do it?

MM: Yeah, yeah. (Chuckles) They all go to outside job.

BE: Different department, yeah?

MM: Yeah. And I think lot of guys wen retire, too, eh? Because these Japanese people, most of them was first generation. Lot of them is retiring age already.

WN: So, when they had the merger, '48, you know, any changes in the working. . . . Well, what was different?

MM: Oh, what was different? All right. The first thing, well, before the trucking [i.e., bulldozing the cane and harvesting it onto trucks with a crane instead of carrying bundled cane by hand onto locomotive cars], we had already, we used to have this sling. They get two cables. That was lousy kind of work, too. You get cables about thirty feet long, I think. And then, on the end of the cable they get one kind of hook like this, see, on both side. And then, the hapai ko man, they got to go get that inside the car, you know. They get 'em all inside the cane car. Because when they finish one field to the other field, they load 'em all in the car, see. So, the hāpai kō man got to go get that damn thing. And the cable is pretty big, and all stay twist around like this, eh? It's not like string or cable like this (MM points to electrical cord). That's why I say, on the end they get one iron ball like that. And that thing is weight, eh? They got to go get that and then line up two, yo. And then, they got to load their cane on top that sling, you see. We call 'em "sling," yeah?

BE: Yeah, yeah. They load 'em on the sling?

MM: Yeah. And they got to get plenty, you know. It's not only two. Two is nothing. Because two, only one pile you make, pau, you no more. You got to get another one, another one, another one. And here, the crane come from behind. You know, the end I was telling you, on the crane, they get the big ring, eh? You got to put that

thing on the ring.

BE: Oh, and it would carry 'em up?

MM: Carry 'em up and load 'em, eh? And then, they get one fella for take off the thing. And if the machine come quick by your place, all right, not so bad. After he unload, well, you get [cable]. You get some more [cable] there. But if not, you got to go get some more [cable]. Otherwise, you going to be waiting, eh?

BE: Yeah, yeah.

WN: So you still needed hāpai kō man, then?

MM: Yeah, still need the hāpai kō man to pile the cane up. Yeah.

BE: That wasn't too long, but, eh?

MM: Yeah, that wasn't too long. And that wire cable was too clumsy, everything. So what they had, they had chain. And end of the chain they get one kinda big loop. And the chain was easy to handle because, you know. . . . I get chain someplace around there, I think.

WN: Because chain you can make straight?

MM: Yeah, easy to make straight, eh?

BE: With the links, no?

MM: Yeah, no more kinks, see? But the cable get kinks and they stay all. . . . Stay like this, you know. Stay like this [i.e., tangled].

WN: How many inches thick was the cable?

MM: Ah, look like three-quarter one, you know.

WN: Three-quarter inch thick?

MM: Yeah. They make it solid, too, because they no want that thing replace all the time, eh? (Chuckles) And then, even on the trucking, was the same way. Even when we went trucking, was the same way. They got to pile it on a sling and load 'em up. And then, later on, somebody wen start to think about that push rake. The machine come and push the cane, pile 'em up, eh, in one long line. And then they had the crane. They had the grabber, yo.

WN: So, like, they had like a push rake, you call it?

MM: Yeah, push rake.

WN: Was like a bulldozer, then?

MM: Yeah, yeah. We call it "push rake." That's like a rake, see. And then, behind come the crane with a grabber like this. And they load 'em up, eh?

WN: Load 'em onto the truck?

MM: Load 'em on the truck. So that was really easy already.

BE: Now, the push rake, how they adjust the cutting? You know, so that they don't cut the whole cane crop every year, eh? They leave some for the . . .

MM: Following year.

BE: Following year, eh? They got to make some kind of adjustment, eh?

MM: They got to make adjustment. So, they have two kinds, see. All the plantations, they had what they call the "irrigation field" and the "dry-land field." What they mean by "dry land," they no more irrigation, see. They only waiting for the rain come down. So the lines are almost flat, yo. Only when they go irrigation field, the lines stay [bumpy] like this, eh? So, that's why, they got to adjust, see. From one field, from unirrigated field you go to the irrigation field, you got to adjust your point, yo. The point, you got to put one up, the other one down, the other one up, so that the low one stay inside the line. And on the long point, the one go inside the line, get one big blade, we call it, knife, yo. And that thing, he slide on top the cane and then he cut only the cane, eh?

BE: That's clever, yeah, though?

MM: That's clever. So, that's lot of work, too, you know. We got to sharpen that thing all time, eh?

BE: Oh, yeah?

MM: Yeah, because that thing come dull, eh? Especially when it come stone field, eh? Rocky field.

BE: Oh? So, they use a grinder to sharpen?

MM: Yeah, grinder for sharp.

WN: So, that took the place of the [human] cane cutters, then?

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: You mean, the push rake would. . . . The cane is still growing?

MM: Still growing, yeah, yeah.

WN: Oh, so that's how they do it now days?

MM: Yeah, that's what they do. But although, some plantations, they get cane cutter. I hear they get cane cutter.

BE: They have cane cutter?

MM: Yeah, but most of them is push rake. But cane cutter, in a way, they cut the cane kinda short, yo. And the cane, every place you cut, you going to lose some amount of juice. You know, when you cut the cane, maybe two, three drop fall down. That's that much you losing. But now, when the cutter go, we not talking about one cane or two cane or what. Thousands and thousands of cane, eh? And every one get damage, you going to lose that much juice. That's quite a bit, you know. That's why in the mill, well, I don't know much about mill. But in the mill, they say, the recovery is--you know, in the end where they make the sugar like that--if they get 90 so many percent, 96 percent or 97 percent, they like to see that thing go more, 98 percent. If they go 98 percent, that means you only losing 2 percent, you know.

BE: Terrific rates, yeah?

MM: Yeah. So, the cane rake, some job, though. And then, we got to get after the cane rake lot of times, yo. Why, because some guys, they operate, they smart, see. When you operate, usually, from two side [i.e., two different directions], you got to push. You got to push from two side, not from one side. Of course, some place, maybe, from one side you can push. If one narrow field like this, you not going to two side and push the cane. You going push only one side, either this way or that way. Now, you imagine this is one field, one narrow field. You going to push only one way. But when you come to one ordinary wide field, you going to push from two side so that you can make a good pile, eh?

All right, now, when you do that, some fellas, they make kāpulu, yo. They push from one side, they go so many feet, and then they come back and they push from the other side. What we tell them, try and push right clean underneath. You not going to push and then from this way, inside here, not push, eh? And if inside here not push, the loaders, they grumble, yo. "Ey, that guys, they kāpulu. You see the cane, eh? Inside here, no stay push." And how you can tell that is when they grab and load, this center part, the cane stay all sticking out like this, see. Because you can tell already, they never push.

WN: So, all uneven, then.

MM: Uneven, yeah. So we tell 'em, "You fellas, try push good. Try push all." But when you tell them, they go do that for little while, and then they go back again. (Chuckles) So, you burn up with that one. (Chuckles)

WN: So, by the time you retired in 1970, was mostly Filipinos working? Field?

MM: Yeah, yeah. Majority Filipinos, no? Even today, you go to the market or anyplace, mostly you see Filipinos, eh? Yeah. And most of them is from Philippine Islands, you know. Not local [born], you know. Yeah.

I had quite a job, though, when I retired. I gotta look after everything.

WN: You had to look after the harvesting, the burning. . . . What, you had schedules?

MM: Yeah, well, they gave me the schedule, no? Not exactly the schedule, but they give me a copy what field, what field, what field you going. That's all they tell me. So, I got to plan. When I finish this field, I got to go this field, this field. And then, when you burn--now, let's say, now, this field get hundred acres. Now, when I go over there, when you going think that the crane and everything going come inside there? Maybe in the morning. All right. You figure to yourself, maybe you burn twenty acres. Twenty acres going carry you to tomorrow morning. Tomorrow morning about nine, ten o'clock. Then, tomorrow morning, you going do the same thing. You going to burn another twenty acres. Or if you think little short, you going burn twenty-two, twenty-three. All depend. You going to see the field, too. Maybe if the cane looks little bit poor, you going to burn little bit more, eh?

But the hard thing was, you know these big guns on Grove Farm, especially like [Lyle] Van Dreser [assistant plantation manager, 1953-69] like that. Saturday afternoons, they no like see no burned cane left in the mill. But today I see. You try go Saturday afternoon, you see plenty loaded trucks over there. Loaded trucks, you know. They no like leave anything like that, because they say, so many hours, the burned cane going deteriorate, see. But [today] I see, not only Grove Farm, not only McBryde. Even Līhu'e, I see. When you go weekends like that, you see, Saturday afternoon, plenty more burned cane get left. That's easy, da kine. But try and make 'em for clean up everything on that afternoon, that's not easy, you know. They like clean up everything. Burned cane. Grinding, well, that's up to them. That's up to the mill guys. And then, what I mean, you have to get enough till you pau hana, see. That's why, I always make it little short. I always make little short, then if no 'nough, I take one small little piece, maybe one acre or two acre, burn 'em off. Just to keep me going for the day, see. That's way hard. But these guys [today], no. Easy, that kind. Anybody can do that kind.

WN: How you prevent the fire from spreading? Say, you only want to do one acre, how you cut 'em off?

MM: Well, you look, more or less, in the map, if you like take one acre. You make the fire break, yo. You get the push [rake], eh? You going to make the fire break and go right around. And all depend which way the wind coming. If you get this trade wind like this,

you go to the back side. Mostly, you got to go in the back side and work your way out, eh? Otherwise, if you going to work from the top, if you going burn from the top, the wind going carry and he going jump on the other side, eh? That's why, we get, lot of time, jump fire, too. If a big field, if next to where we going to burn is another field and it's big cane already, it's almost ready for harvest, but we no like 'em jump in there, we get the water tank stay take care by the road there. In case of jump, eh, we shoot water, yo. Lot of time happen, too, you know.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 15-14-2-87; SIDE ONE

WN: How did you make the firebreak? I mean, what do you use?

MM: Push cane. With the rake.

BE: Push rake. Cut a path, eh?

MM: Yeah. And another thing where is hard, too, this Van Dreser, he tell, "Wait till that thing is really dry, then burn. No burn when you only half [dry]."

I tell 'em, "Well, that's lot of places danger." They like everything so and so, you know. (Chuckles) So, we make a firebreak, but usually, if a big field, let's say over here is the hundred-acre field, we start from the back and work our way this way. If the next field is maybe almost ready for harvest or maybe about seven-, eight-month cane and get 'opala, the fire, if it go inside there, he going burn, see. So, as long we start from the bottom and work our way this way, after we get quite a ways inside, maybe about hundred yards inside, well, you all right. You safe already. No matter which way you burn, no trouble.

WN: How long does twenty acres take to burn?

MM: Well, all depend if half dry or really dry, or if a bad field where you got to make backfire or what. But if you don't have to make backfire, we tell 'em, "Hit 'em with the wind," yo. "Hit 'em with the wind" is, you just burn 'em with the wind. That thing go. (MM makes sound of fast-burning cane.) No more half an hour, that thing pau. But if the next field is bad, we got to make backfire, takes you long time. All depend how long that backfire is. Because you got to go real slow, you know. Especially when dry, that spark all time flying, eh?

BE: Yeah, that's right, boy.

WN: How you start the fire?

MM: We start fire with that 'ōpala. We bunch 'em up, eh? I see lot of plantations, they get small [blow] torch, eh? We tried with a torch, too, but humbug, too, the torch. When you pau, eh, you don't know where you going to [store] 'em. You got to bring 'em way the hell where to put 'em away, eh? But if only with 'ōpala, when you pau, you pau. You got nothing to store away. (Chuckles) And it's easy to get the 'ōpala.

WN: So, actually, burning cane hasn't changed much then?

MM: Yeah, yeah. Burning cane never change much. You got to do the same way. Everybody got to do the same way. Backfire. That's what they say. Even sometime you go in the mountain, up the mountain it's burning, eh? To prevent that, try and make a backfire. Firebreak. Somebody got to go ahead and then make a firebreak and start to burn backfire, yo. You know? And then, by the time the other fire come already, this fire stay pretty far in already, see. Then you be safe. But if you just let 'em go, he going continue.

WN: So when you retired 1970, were you happy or sad or what?

MM: No. I was kinda happy. I didn't have to go through that worry already. Then when these heavy rain, sometime during the night you get heavy rain, I used to go out in the midnight and go check, you know.

WN: Check what?

MM: Check if everything is going all right, because as much as possible, they no like shut down, eh? So, as long they can go, well, keep going. And then today overseers, they lucky, too. Every extra hour they put, they get 'em either in pay or they get 'em in extra holiday, see. But my days, no.

WN: No more overtime, then?

MM: No more overtime. I used to work, lot of times, twelve hours a day. And I used to work seven days a week. Of course, Sunday, it's mostly only burning, eh? Sunday, I go out burn and make ready for Monday. And then, no more extra, no more nothing.

BE: No bonus or anything?

MM: No. Well, bonus, we used to get, but not only me get a bonus. When we get bonus, the whole supervisors get.

WN: So, when you retired, you said you were making $825 a month?

MM: Yeah, yeah.

WN: That was still more than the regular men?

MM: Oh, yeah. That was more than the regular men. But that wasn't

long, you know. I only had about seven, eight months [left], I think, when I had that raise. (Chuckles)

WN: And before then was how much?

MM: Before then was $775 or $780 or something. Well, anyway, those days, that money was pretty good, eh? Today, even the wahines go cover seed--you see the wahines go cover seed? You see in some fields, you see the ladies they cover seed?

BE: Yeah, yeah.

WN: What do you mean, "cover seed"?

MM: Cover seed, where they . . .

BE: Seed cane.

WN: Planting, you mean?

MM: Yeah, the planting, eh? The planting, they [i.e., machines] don't make a good job, see. Why they no make good job, some places, the dirt is so lumpy. They have a cover machine attached to the planter. But the cover machine doesn't cover good because lumpy, eh? So the wahines got to come behind [the machine] and cover [by hand], eh? Even those wahines, they make more than $800 a month. (Chuckles)

WN: Mostly Filipinos?

MM: Yeah, yeah. All Filipinos. But that's good money for them. And most of the wahines is from Philippines, see. They was getting hard time there.

WN: So, what do you think the future of sugar is?

MM: Future of sugar is, lately, in Waialua [O'ahu], they going to close. So, it's not bright, no? It's not bright. Only few plantations [remaining]. Kaua'i, who might close? Līhu'e? I don't know. I stay only thinking. But Līhu'e, they putting lot of expense, too, now. Yeah, they wen get rid of the flume. But now is the flume type too, but I don't know how they going to shift the cane down. Roller type or. . . . Before, was with water, see? And then, the water used to give trouble all time. They been get fined, eh? Several times, you know, they been get fined, the Līhu'e Plantation. Because the water block up someplace and then go down the stream, go down Kalapaki [Beach], eh?

BE: Big fine, too.

MM: So, I don't know, the sugar. I hope they no close over here. Because if they close over here, I don't know what going happen. Although plenty hotels over here. They going make another one over

there down Shipwreck [in Māhā'ulepū].

WN: So, actually, now, lot of tourism over sugar now, huh?

MM: Yeah.

WN: How you feel about that?

MM: Well, I feel sorry if the sugar close up. But if the president do something, if they keep up the same way, what, eighteen cents a pound. If eighteen cents a pound, they can barely make 'em. Some plantations, they make a profit. But if they go down to twelve, the one they talking about, twelve, they no can broke even even. Any business, if you no can broke even, you no can run the business. So, I hope [U.S. Senators] Spark [Matsunaga] and Dan [Inouye], and [U.S. Representative Dan] Akaka can do something. Now, even Waialua going close down. O'ahu going get plenty unemployment, no?

WN: You know, after we finish with all this, we going to put everybody's story in this book and put 'em in the library, yeah? So, when young people read your story, what do you want them to remember about you?

MM: About me? (Chuckles) Ah, nah, no need they remember nothing about me. They can figure that I was one big fool.

(Laughter)

WN: But you work hard, though.

MM: Yeah, I work hard. But in a way, I work hard and I live long and I'm pretty healthy, so, you know, I get no regret, no? I spending my leisure time, you know, enjoying my leisure time. So, looks like it paying off.

(Laughter)

WN: Well, okay. Well, thank you very much.

MM: Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

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